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Celtics top Hub pro athlete salaries

Boston Business Journal - by [Jesse Noyes](#)[Print](#) [Email](#) [Reprints](#) [RSS Feeds](#) [Add to Del.icio.us](#) [Digg This](#) [Comments](#)

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Now here's a group of high-salaried workers who deliver results.

The Big Three of the **Boston Celtics** not only dominated the basketball court this year, they've also topped the list of highest-paid athletes in the Bay State.

The Celtics' Kevin Garnett, Paul Pierce and Ray Allen, who earlier this year led the team to its first **National Basketball Association** championship in 22 years, rounded out the top three spots on the list of highest-paid athletes among the state's well-compensated sports stars.

Garnett held the highest spot with a 2007-2008 season salary of nearly \$24.8 million. Behind him was Pierce with a salary of about \$18 million. And third was Allen with a salary of nearly \$17.4 million.

There are several reasons the Big Three of the Celtics take all three top positions on the highest paid list, ranging from the average salary of NBA players compared with other leagues — the median NBA salary is the highest at \$2.75 million — to the departure of top-paid athletes this year from Boston. But one thing it signifies, said Cleon Daskalakis, president of Andover-based Celebrity Marketing, which represents a number of local athletes, is how much the Celtics want championships.

"What it does tell you ... is the commitment that the Celtics have to winning," he said.

The rise of Pierce and Allen is largely due to salary increases — often built into contracts — and the departure of baseball slugger Manny Ramirez, who was traded from the **Boston Red Sox** to the **Los Angeles Dodgers**.

But another newcomer joined the list. Football wide receiver Randy Moss, who was traded to the **New England Patriots** last year, took the No. 4 spot with a salary worth just a little more than \$14 million. The closest Patriots player behind Moss is quarterback Tom Brady at 12th with a salary of just over \$8 million.

Jason Howarth, vice president of consumer and sports marketing at Boston advertising agency Conover Tuttle Pace, said those likely to climb the list in the next couple of years include Dustin Pedroia, who this year won **Major League Baseball's** American League Most Valuable Player Award. Pedroia reportedly will earn \$1.5 million salary in 2009 as part of a \$40.5 million contract he signed with the Red Sox.