

Prize Money in Tennis

By
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Prize money in tennis varies considerably. Grand slams events as you would expect would have the greatest amount of prize money and this is equal across men and women. Table 1 represents prize money for the 2019 US Open across the three different formats – singles, doubles and mixed doubles. Note the significantly higher amount of prize money in singles compared to doubles and mixed doubles. It could be argued that there is just as much skill in singles and there is in doubles. Although mixed doubles is somewhat debatable based on the fact that men are more dominate than women in tennis, and as a strategy the women will be targeted (particularly with both players at the net), which has issues with the integrity of the game. Also mixed doubles is only played in grand slam and Olympic games events (and also the Hopman Cup but that is more of a novelty event) and due to the workload of focusing on either singles or doubles throughout a two week grand slam event, makes it difficult for top singles and doubles players to complete in mixed doubles. Although top women singles players are more likely to participate in doubles (or mixed doubles) compared to men (due to women playing only best-of-3 set matches compared to men playing best-of-5 set matches and hence women having lesser time on court in singles matches to compete in doubles or mixed doubles matches). Similarly, top men and women doubles players could also compete in mixed doubles events based on the scoring systems used in doubles and mixed doubles. However, it would be unlikely that top singles men and women players would compete in both doubles and mixed doubles. Also note that the prize money for doubles and mixed doubles is per team which means that the winners of a doubles grand slam tournament are earning \$370,000 from the 2019 US Open, which is a lesser amount than a quarterfinalist in singles (at \$500,000). Also note that 7 rounds are played in singles, 6 rounds are played in doubles and 5 rounds are played in mixed doubles. There is an argument in grand slams to extend doubles to 7 rounds and mixed doubles to possibly 6 rounds, which would increase the number of participants (end hence the prize money).

Tournament	Winner	Runner Up	Semifinalist	Quarterfinalist
Singles	\$3,850,000	\$1,900,000	\$960,000	\$500,000
Doubles (per team)	\$740,000	\$370,000	\$175,000	\$91,000
Mixed Doubles (per team)	\$160,000	\$76,000	\$38,000	\$19,975

Table 1: Prize money for the 2019 US Open across the three different formats – singles, doubles and mixed doubles.

Djokovic has currently more prize money (\$135 million) compared to Federer (\$126 million) despite Federer winning more grand slams at 22 and 102 singles titles compared to Djokovic with 16 grand slam and 75 singles titles. Note that Jimmy Connors is the leading male player,

with 109 career singles titles in a career spanning three decades. It is simply the case that Djokovic has won more recent titles than Federer and with prize money going up a certain percentage each year enables a player to have more prize money (even without the most number of grand slams or total titles). It was noted that the total prize money compensation for the 2019 US Open is \$57,238,700, a more than 13.2% increase on the same total last year. It will be interesting to see who earns more prize money out of Djokovic and Nadal at the end of their careers. Nadal has currently \$111 million (with 19 grand slams and 84 total singles titles).

Serena Williams has currently 90.6 million in total prize money (highest achieved by any female with the next highest earner being Venus Williams at 41.5 million) and with 72 career singles titles (including 23 singles slams and 14 grand slams doubles) is disadvantaged on the tour because the prize money in the women's WTA (is not as high as the prize money in the men's ATP (although grand slam prize money are equivalent across genders). For fairness in men's and women's tennis Serena should have around \$126-\$135 million in prize money (equivalent to Federer or Djokovic in men's tennis). This also sets an example across the workplace in general with men on average receiving a higher income than women. Serena Williams addresses this issue.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/tennis-champions-drawn-into-equal-pay-debate>

As mentioned above, doubles is not paid as high as singles tournaments (despite their arguably being just as much skill in both forms of tennis). Mike Bryan is the leading prize money for doubles at 16.7 million (significantly less than the top singles players). Mike has won 123 career doubles titles and the record number of grand slam doubles titles at 18 and 4 mixed doubles grand slam titles. Mike is ranked 30 overall in terms of career prize money for men.