

Sydney Leroux says she paid more for child care than she made in salary from Orlando Pride soccer team ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Sydney Leroux balances motherhood and her career just as any other woman in the country. And it can be just as difficult even if she is a professional athlete.

Leroux, a member of the U.S. women's national team, said she spent more money on child care last year than she brought in playing for the NWSL's Orlando Pride, per Forbes' Michael LoRé.

Leroux: Can't survive on NWSL salary

Leroux helped the USWNT win gold at the 2012 London Olympics and win the first of its back-to-back FIFA Women's World Cup titles in 2015. She has 35 goals in 77 caps but hasn't been with the team since 2017. She and her husband, MLS Orlando City forward Dom Dwyer, welcomed son Cassius in 2016 and daughter, Roux, last June.

"If you're not on the national team, you're sitting in the back seat," Leroux said, via Forbes. "I think we need to make it important that it touches everybody. What we're doing is only affecting certain people and I think that that's not good enough because we're losing out on really good athletes because you can't survive on an NWSL salary.

"People have different jobs, people's parents are helping them and that's not OK. This isn't a hobby, this is our livelihood."

Leroux's husband makes around \$1.3 million in base salary, and since she has a platform from her visibility with the U.S. National Team, she gains income from sponsored posts on Instagram.

Most of the moms in the league don't have those advantages.

What is the NWSL salary?

The NWSL announced increased salaries this offseason, bringing the maximum up from \$46,200 to \$50,000. The minimum is only up to \$20,000. It makes it incredibly tough to juggle the demands of motherhood while playing under that budget, as many families recognize.

The average cost of infant child care in Florida is \$9,238 annually, according to the Economic Policy Institute. For an infant and a 4-year-old it's closer to \$11,185. That's 22 percent of the maximum NWSL salary for 2020, a price point deemed unaffordable by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines.

That doesn't include the cost of feeding and clothing a child. Many women wait until they've retired to have children, or at least consider doing so, given how difficult it can be to play a sport while raising kids.

What can the NWSL do about it?

There is no CBA between the NWSL players and the league. The one that approximately 30 players fall under is the CBA between the USWNT Players Association and U.S. Soccer that is currently the subject of a lawsuit. That CBA requires the players to play in the NWSL.

A CBA between the NWSL Players Association, which was only recognized as a legal union in November 2018, would help support players in various ways. But specifically mothers.

"Look at the WNBA and how far they've come," Leroux said, referencing to Forbes the WNBA's newly signed CBA and its provisions for mothers.

The "player-driven" deal made sure to include real issues facing players with children, WNBPA president Nneka Ogwumike said in news conferences and in a chat on "The Tea" for The Player's Tribune. It includes maternity leave with a full salary, an annual childcare stipend of \$5,000, two-bedroom apartments for parents and workplace accommodations for nursing mothers.

In a true showing of its vision to set a standard for women of all careers throughout the country, it included a reimbursement of up to

\$60,000 for veterans looking toward adoption, surrogacy or fertility treatment costs. They also boosted salaries to six figures.

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