

Hamilton to become \$1bn sportsman

Lewis Hamilton's fifth place finish in the Brazilian Grand Prix – allowing him to clinch the title by a single point – is likely to see him become a \$1 billion sportsman.

According to UK newspaper, The Times, the youngest ever world champion in the history of Formula One could become the only person who could knock Tiger Woods from the top of the podium as the world's highest-earning sportsman. The golfer is on course to become the first person to accumulate \$1 billion from sport by 2010, according to Forbes magazine, pocketing an estimated \$115 million (£71 million) in the year to June.

Hamilton's contract with McLaren contract is worth an estimated £75 million over five years and a sponsorship deal with Reebok will add a further £20 million or so. But if he continues his winning streak to 2012, when his McLaren contract will be due for renewal, that pay cheque alone could jump to £30 million a year, and people close to Hamilton are already confident that his career earnings could well top £500 million.

That could surpass the estimated career earnings of Schumacher, who at his peak was a one-man business empire, complete with branded dolls, sunglasses and a vacuum cleaner, and David Beckham, Britain's highest earning sports star to date, whose lucrative sponsorship deals earned him £20 million a year at the height of his career.

HAMILTON to become \$1bn sportsman. **Sportbusiness Internacional**. Disponível em: <www.sportbusiness.com>. Acesso em: 7 nov. 2008.

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