

## Should a tax exile be Sports Personality of the Year?

Published: January 14, 2026, 12:21 am

---

I didn't watch Sport Personality of the Year last night. I was always pretty sure my choice, Jo Pavey, would not win. And the small part of the programme I saw was excruciating.

But it was still profoundly disappointing to find Lewis Hamilton won. Apart from the obvious question about whether Formula 1 is a sport and the questions that need to be asked about so many of its financial arrangements the simple fact is that I thought that this was an event focussed on UK sporting achievements and Hamilton is a tax exile. How do those facts fit together?

Hamilton is obviously gifted. I won't deny that.

But not paying tax is no way to celebrate that.

For me being gifted is not enough. Being a good citizen is part of the deal as well. And he's clearly not winning in that category. He is, like it or not, a tax avoider by choice. Nothing else explains [his Monaco tax residence](#). And that's a failure in my book.