

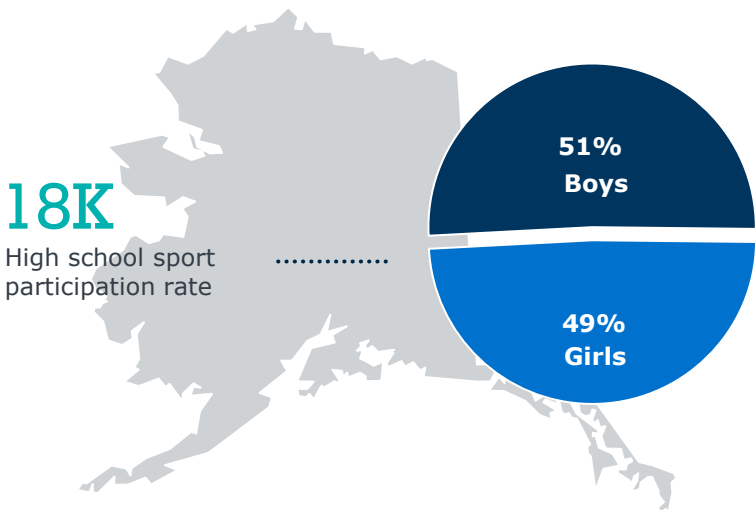
High School Sports Participation State Profile

State Profile: Alaska

Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2023-2024, the high school sport participation rate was 18,840 in Alaska. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

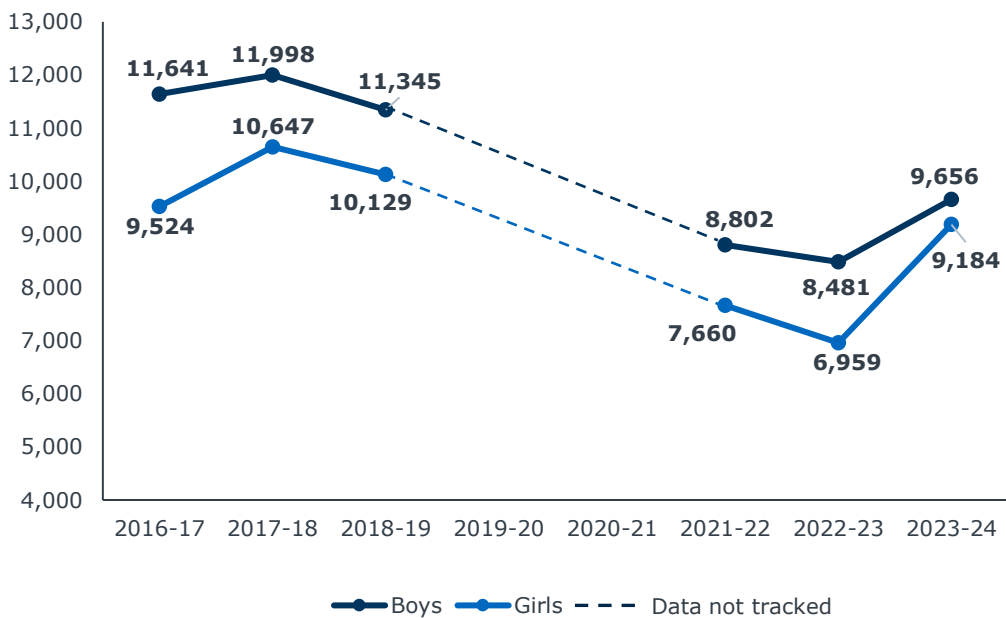
High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24
n=18,840 (total participation)



Participation Down, But Gap Between Girls, Boys Closing

Participation in high school sports is declining among boys and girls over the last eight years. However, participation started increased in 2023. Meanwhile, the gap in girls' and boys' participation is one of the smallest in the country.

Change in Participation Rates, 2016-17 to 2023-24



Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

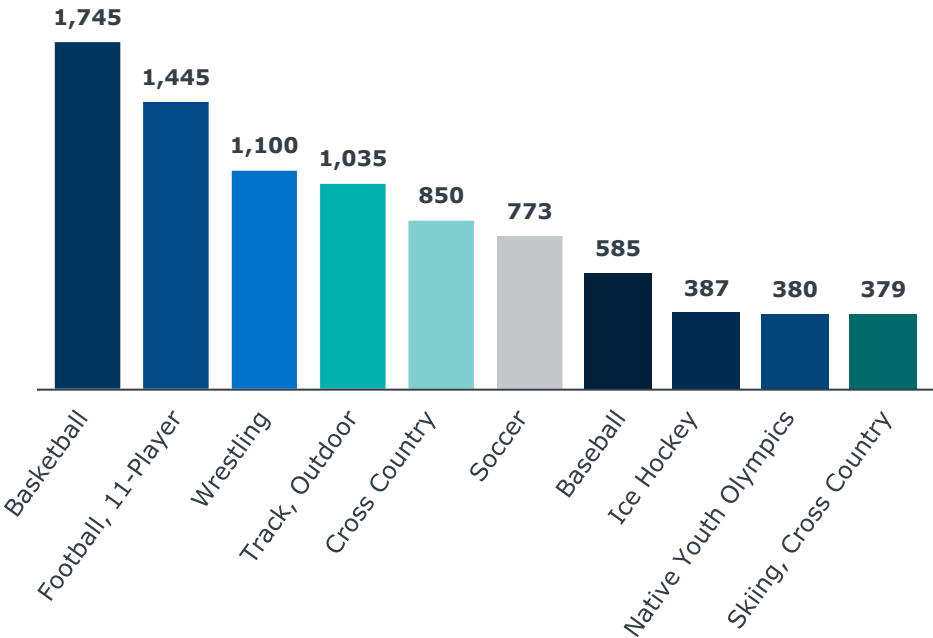
Alaska's Top Sports Deviate From National Trends

Unlike most states, basketball was the biggest boys' sport as of 2023-2024. Other deviations from national trends include ice hockey, Native Youth Olympics, and cross country skiing.

The top girls' sports in also vary more from national trends. For example, cross country skiing, flag football, and Native Youth Olympics are among the top 10 sports in Alaska and not in the top 10 nationally.

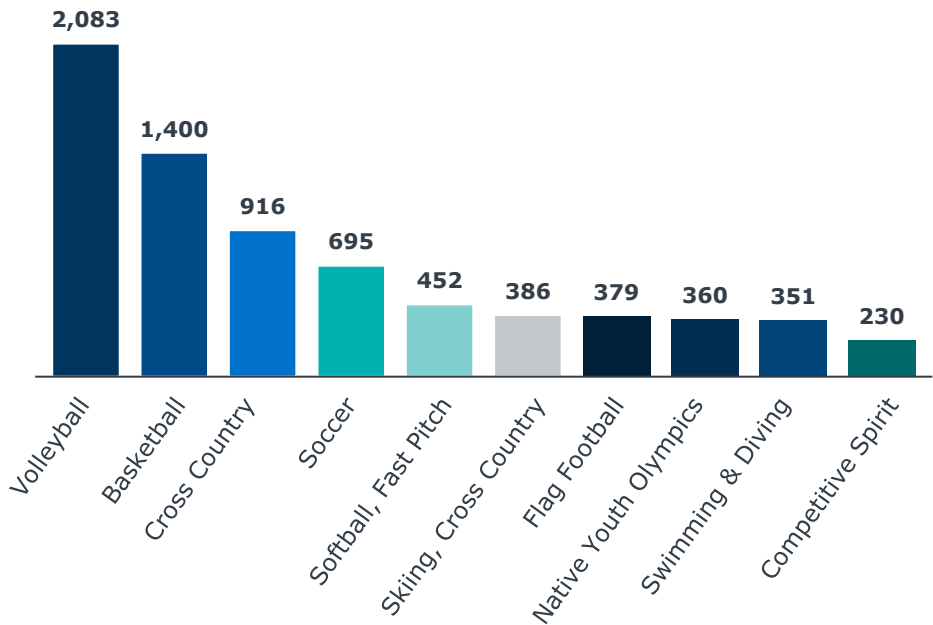
Top 10 Boys' Sports by Participation Rate, 2022-2023

n=9,656



Top 10 Girls' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024

n=9,184



Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

Boys

Areas of Consistent Growth

One sport grew both in the last year and across the last eight years. This trend may signal emerging and/or sustainable recruitment areas.

- Competitive Spirit

Areas of Steady Decline

In comparison, participation fell in the last year and across the last eight years among three sports. Because the participation rate double counts multi-sport athletes, it is possible some of these declines may be attributed to growing specialization.

- Soccer
- Baseball
- Ice Hockey

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Basketball	1,745	4%	-19%
Football—11-Player	1,445	0%	-22%
Wrestling	1,100	9%	-20%
Track and Field — Outdoor	1,035	340%	-21%
Cross Country	850	6%	-30%
Soccer	773	-4%	-19%
Baseball	585	-5%	-13%
Ice Hockey	387	-33%	-34%
Native Youth Olympics	380	82%	N/A
Skiing — Cross Country	379	13%	-9%
Swimming & Diving	320	14%	-14%
Tennis	178	-1%	-21%
Mixed 6-Coed Volleyball	148	47%	-46%
Riflery	90	8%	-17%
Esport	56	10%	N/A
Football—9-player	53	N/A	N/A
Bowling	50	25%	-46%
Unified Track and Field—Outdoor	33	10%	N/A
Decathlon	26	N/A	N/A
Competitive Spirit Squad	22	83%	267%
Adapted Track	1	0%	N/A

Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

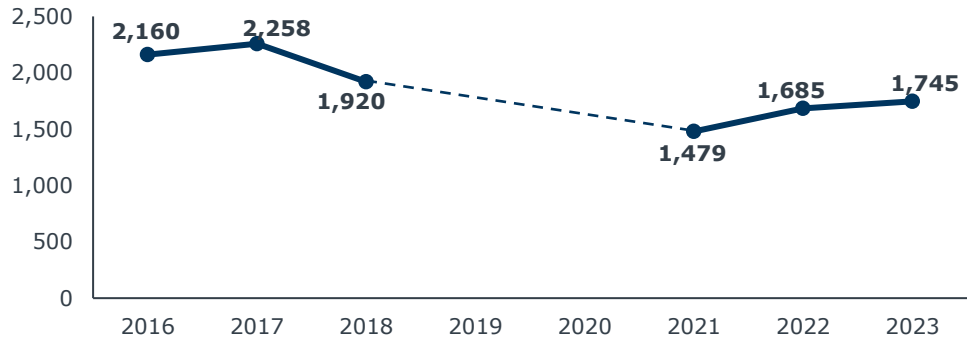
Boys

Biggest Sport

Basketball Rebounding From Pandemic Decline

Participation in basketball decreased 19% between 2016 and 2023. However, it is showing recent signs of growth. Participation increased 18% from 2021 to 2023.

Change in Boys' Basketball Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

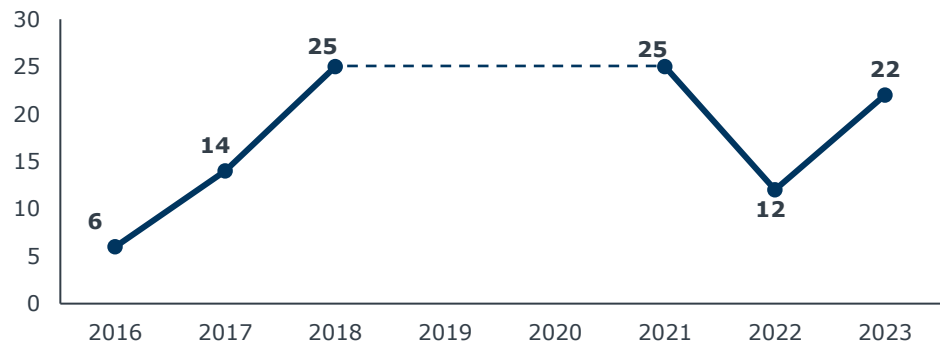


Fastest Growth

Competitive Spirit Small But Growing Among Boys

Participation in competitive spirit increased 267% between 2016 and 2023, but it remains the smallest boys' sport in the state. It is the only boys' sport to grow from 2016 to 2023.

Change in Boys' Wrestling Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

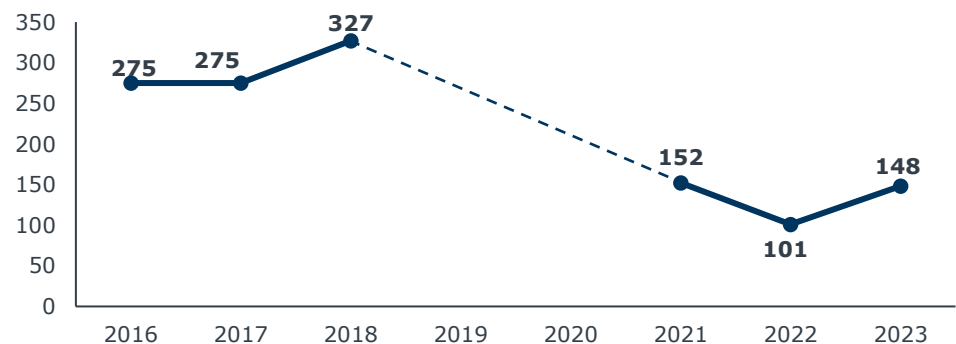


Largest Decline

Fewer Boys Participating in Coed Volleyball

Participation in mixed 6 coed volleyball declined 46% between 2016 and 2023.

Change in Boys' Mixed 6 Coed Volleyball Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24



Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

Girls

Areas of Consistent Growth

Five sports grew both in the last year and across the last eight years. This trend may signal emerging and/or sustainable recruitment areas. They included:

- Volleyball
- Cross Country
- Skiing, Cross Country
- Competitive Spirit
- Bowling

Areas of Steady Decline

In comparison, participation fell in the last year and across the last eight years among six sports. Because the participation rate double counts multi-sport athletes, it is possible some of these declines may be attributed to growing specialization.

- Basketball
- Soccer
- Softball, Fast Pitch
- Tennis
- Mixed 6 Coed Volleyball
- Ice Hockey

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Volleyball	2,083	63%	72%
Basketball	1,400	-1%	-20%
Cross Country	916	22%	15%
Soccer	695	-9%	-28%
Softball — Fast Pitch	452	-7%	-20%
Skiing — Cross Country	386	29%	3%
Flag Football	379	50%	-31%
Native Youth Olympics	360	81%	N/A
Swimming & Diving	351	13%	-18%
Competitive Spirit	230	53%	49%
Wrestling	208	4%	-23%
Tennis	181	-2%	-16%
Mixed 6-Coed Volleyball	134	-8%	-81%
Riflery	102	29%	-4%
Bowling	62	38%	35%
Gymnastics	51	2%	-50%
Dance/Drill	45	-10%	1,400%
Unified Track and Field — Outdoor	37	61%	N/A
Decathlon	25	N/A	N/A
Esport	25	-26%	N/A
Football—11-Player	5	25%	-84%
Ice Hockey	5	-50%	-96%

Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

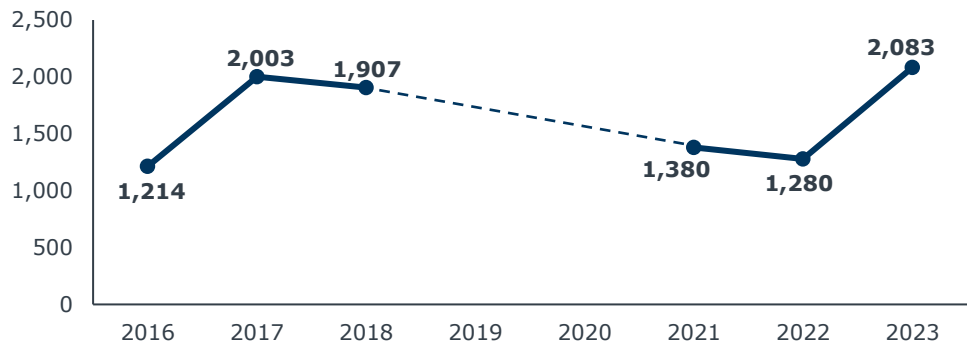
Girls

Biggest Sport

Volleyball Recovers from Pandemic-Era Declines

Participation in volleyball increased 72% between 2016 and 2023, despite several consecutive years of decline.

Change in Girls' Volleyball Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

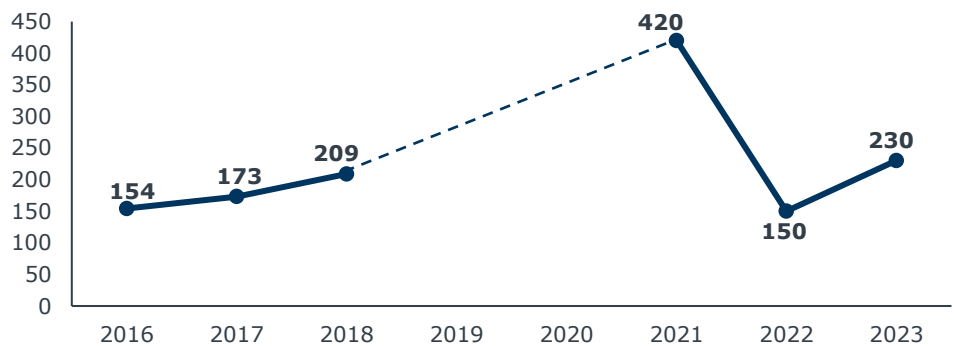


Fastest Growth¹

Competitive Spirit Growing, Despite Recent Volatility

Participation in competitive spirit increased 49% between 2016 and 2023, despite a sharp drop in 2022.

Change in Girls' Competitive Spirit Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

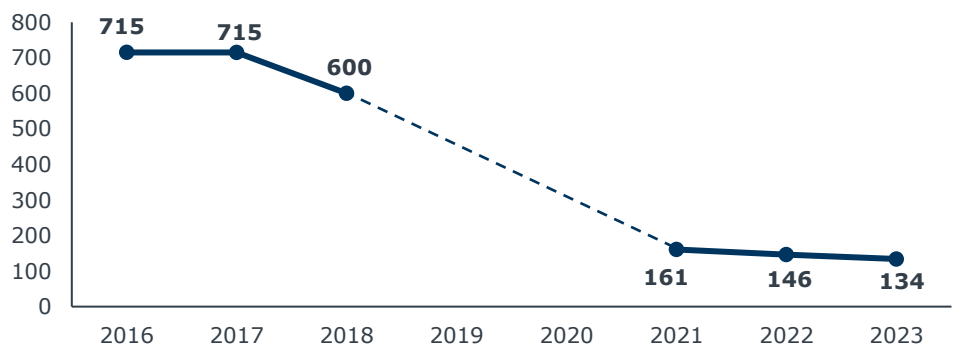


Largest Decline²

Fewer Girls Participating in Coed Volleyball

Like boys, participation in mixed 6 coed volleyball declined between 2016 and 2023 (-81%).

Change in Girls' Mixed 6 Coed Volleyball Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24



1) Excludes volleyball and sports with fewer than 100 participants
2) Excludes sports with fewer than 100 participants

Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Appendix: About the Data

Data in this report come from the National Federation of State High School Association's "[High School Athletics Participation Survey](#)."

Limitations of the Data

- The numbers cited in this report reflect the "participation rate." An individual who participated in two sports is counted twice, three sports – three times, etc.
- Participation rates are not adjusted for population changes.
- Most states exclude data from independent schools, unless they are part of the state league, which varies by state and sport.
- Data do not include club sport participation.
- Some states did not report data for all years included in the report. Meanwhile, others appear to have reported duplicate data in a few cases. These cases are called out in the report when applicable.

Definitions

"Adapted" refers to sports that are modified (e.g., rules, equipment) for special-needs students.

"Unified" refers to sports that are open to special-needs students but aren't adapted to meet their needs.

Appendix: National High School Sports Participation

2023-2024 Top 10 Sports in USA by Participation

Top Boys' Sports

1. Football – 11-Player	1,031,508
2. Track and Field – Outdoor	625,333
3. Basketball	536,668
4. Baseball	471,701
5. Soccer	467,483
6. Wrestling	291,874
7. Cross Country	239,874
8. Tennis	157,835
9. Golf	155,174
10. Swimming and Diving	116,799
Total Boys' Participation	4,638,785

Top Girls' Sports

1. Track and Field – Outdoor	506,015
2. Volleyball	479,125
3. Soccer	383,895
4. Basketball	367,284
5. Softball – Fast Pitch	345,451
6. Tennis	195,766
7. Cross Country	192,969
8. Competitive Spirit	181,023
9. Swimming and Diving	138,174
10. Lacrosse	101,204
Total Girls' Participation	3,423,517

Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.