

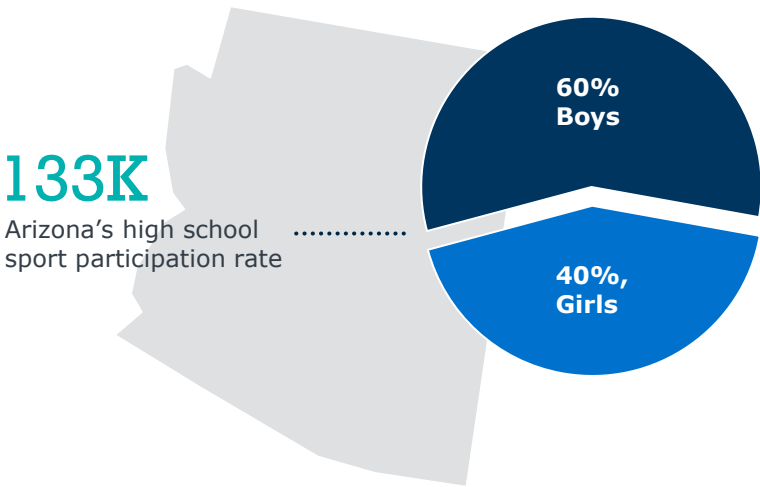
High School Sports Participation State Profile

State Profile: Arizona

Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2022-2023, the high school sports participation rate was 133,036 in Arizona. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

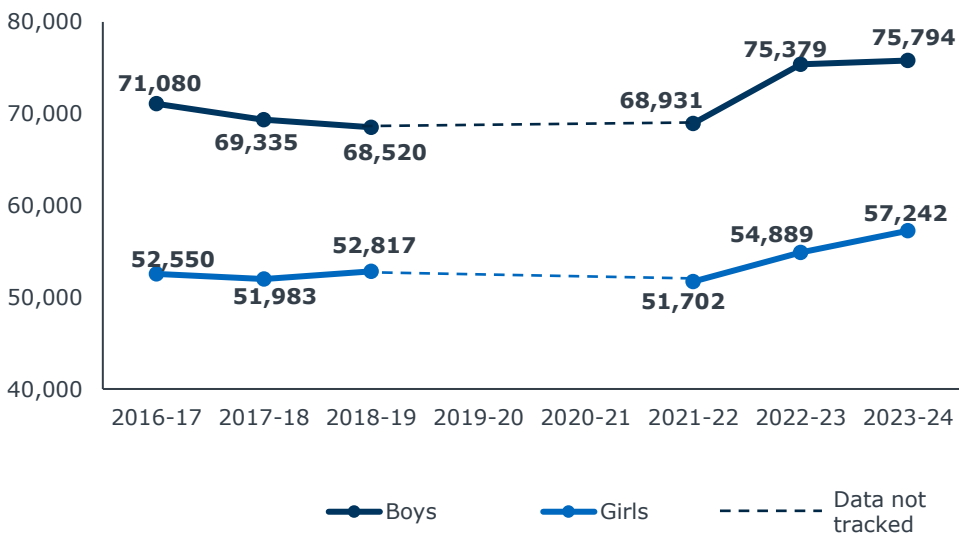
High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24
n=133,036 participation rate



Gap Between Boys, Girls Persists After Pandemic

Participation in high school sports is growing among boys and girls over the last eight years. Girls' participation has grown faster, shrinking the gap slightly.

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



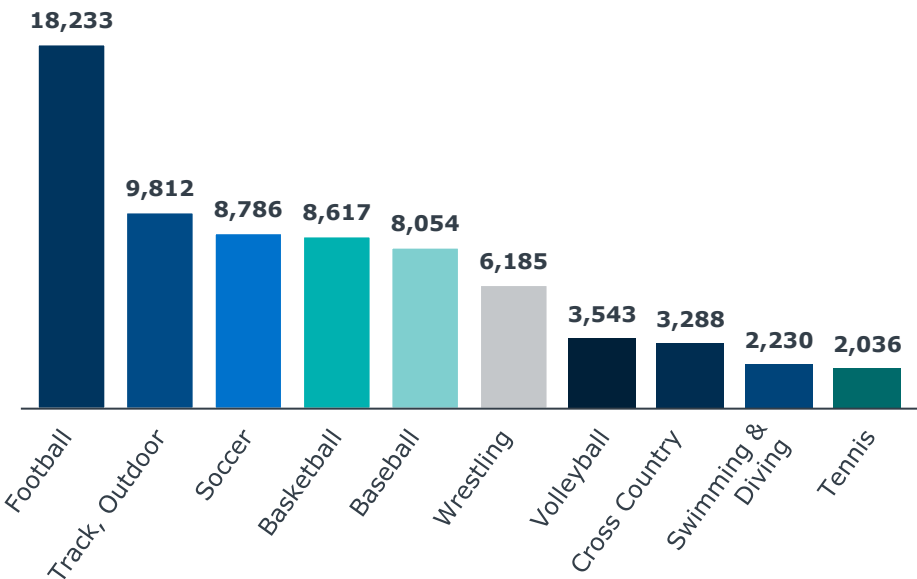
Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

Top Boys Sports Mostly Mirror National Trends

Like most states, football was the biggest boys' sport as of 2023-2024. The remaining top sports also reflect national trends.

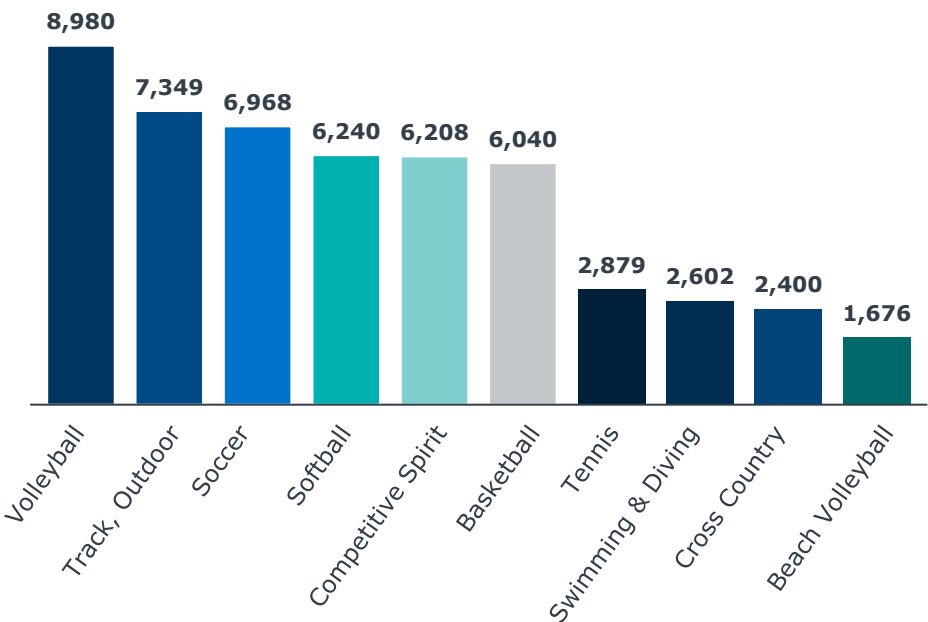
Top 10 Boys' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024
n=75,794 participation rate across 14 sports



Flag Football Emerging as a Popular Sport among Girls

The top girls' sports similarly reflect national trends. The biggest deviation was beach volleyball, which is not in the top 10 nationally.

Top 10 Girls' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024
n=80,897 participation rate across 25 sports



Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

Boys

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:

- Soccer
- Baseball
- Wrestling
- Volleyball
- Golf

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.

- Basketball
- Swimming & Diving
- Tennis

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Football,11-Player	18,233	-10%	3%
Track & Field, Outdoor	9,812	-2%	5%
Soccer	8,786	7%	13%
Basketball	8,617	-2%	-34%
Baseball	8,054	2%	3%
Wrestling	6,185	16%	20%
Volleyball	3,543	2%	81%
Cross Country	3,288	3%	-12%
Swimming & Diving	2,230	-6%	-17%
Tennis	2,036	-1%	-8%
Golf	1,942	5%	16%
Football, 8-player	1,686	176%	-34%
eSports	1,069	4%	N/A
Competitive Spirit	313	74%	N/A

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

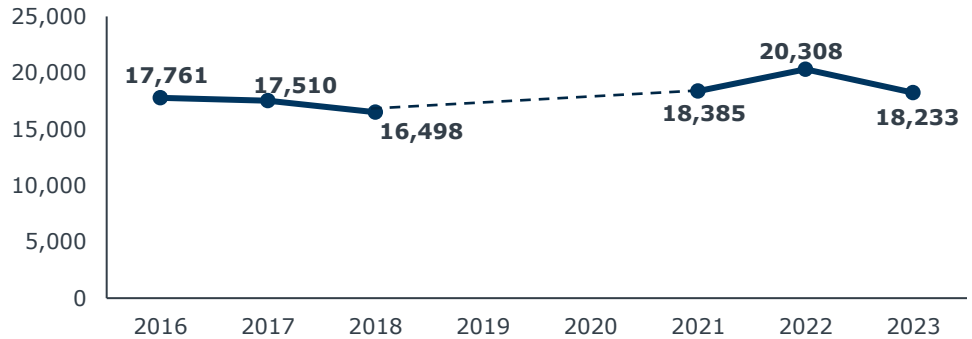
Boys

Biggest Sport

Modest Growth in Football Participation

Participation in football increased 3% between 2016 and 2023. However, it is showing recent signs of decline, with a 10% drop from 2022 to 2023.

Change in Boys Football Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

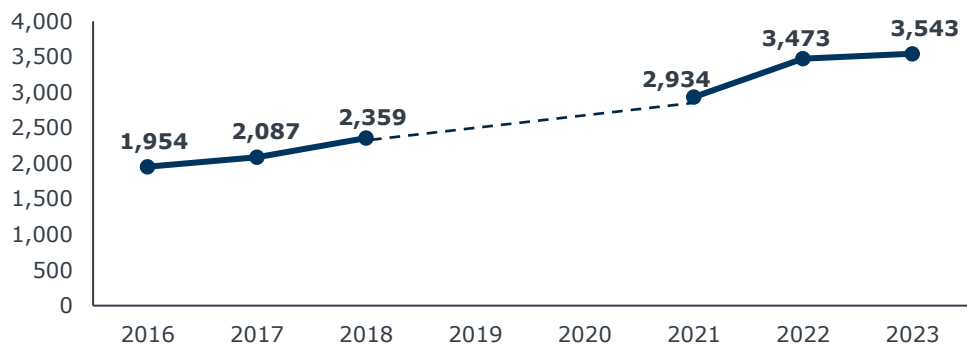


Fastest Growth

Steady Growth in Volleyball Participation

In contrast, participation in volleyball has grown every year since 2016, with a total increase of 81%.

Change in Boys Volleyball Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

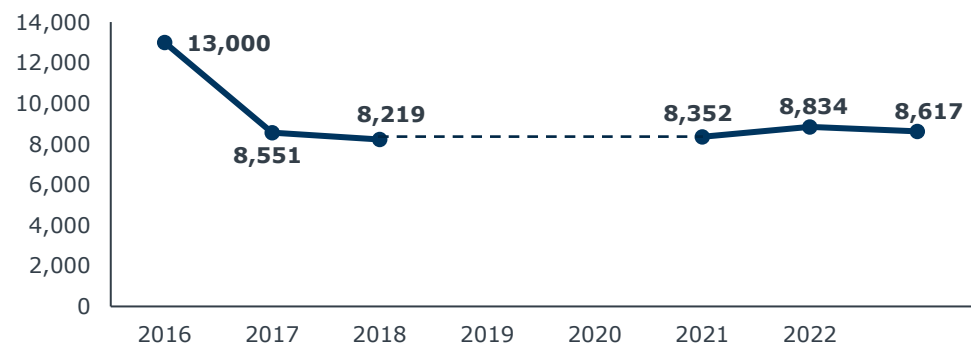


Largest Decline

Basketball Participation Mostly Flat After Sharp Drop

After dropping 34% between 2016 and 2017, participation in basketball has started to level off, with some slight increases since 2018.

Change in Boys Basketball 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

Seven 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:

- Track & Field, Outdoor
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Wrestling
- Badminton
- Golf
- Baseball

Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Basketball
- Swimming & diving
- Cross country
- Football, 11-player

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Volleyball	8,980	-1%	13%
Track & Field, Outdoor	7,349	8%	9%
Soccer	6,968	2%	7%
Softball	6,240	0%	-7%
Competitive Spirit	6,208	0%	4%
Basketball	6,040	-2%	-8%
Tennis	2,879	9%	6%
Swimming & Diving	2,602	-4%	-24%
Cross Country	2,400	-3%	-18%
Beach Volleyball	1,676	11%	N/A
Flag Football	1,552	N/A	N/A
Wrestling	1,522	17%	526%
Badminton	1,383	6%	14%
Golf	1,152	7%	25%
Esport	169	-4%	N/A
Football, 11-Player	77	-71%	-21%
Baseball	38	15%	153%
Football, 8-player	7	40%	-46%

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

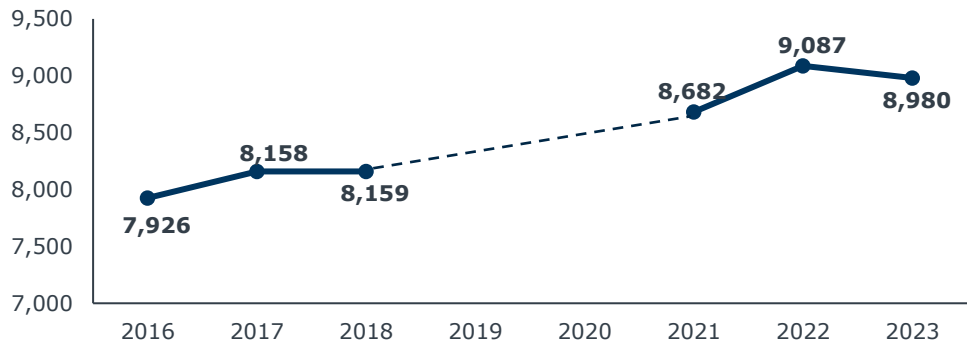
Girls

Biggest Sport

Steady Growth in Volleyball

Participation in volleyball is up 13% since 2016, with increases every year but 2023.

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

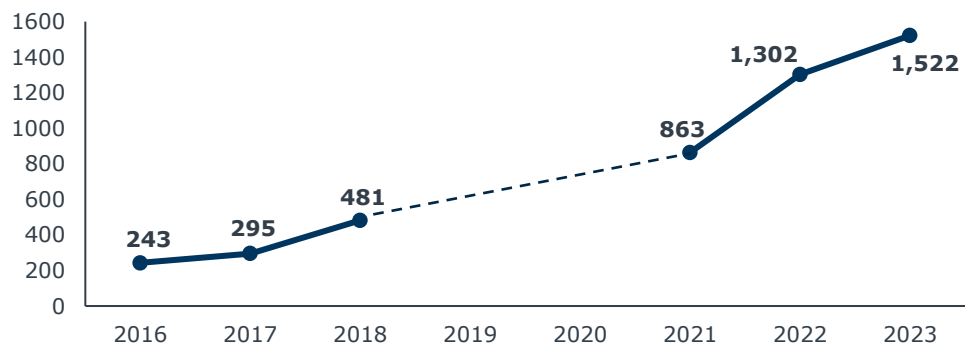


Fastest Growth

Wrestling Shows Quick Growth Among Girls

Participation in wrestling has increased every year since 2016, with 526% total growth by 2023.

Change in Girls Wrestling Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

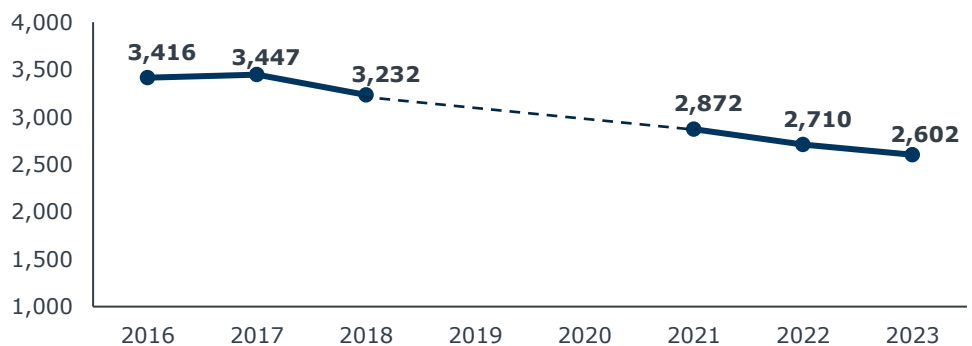


Largest Decline

Slow But Steady Decline for Swimming and Diving

In contrast, participation in swimming and diving has dropped every year, with a total decline of 24%.

Change in Girls Swimming & Diving Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24



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.