

# High School Sports Participation State Profile

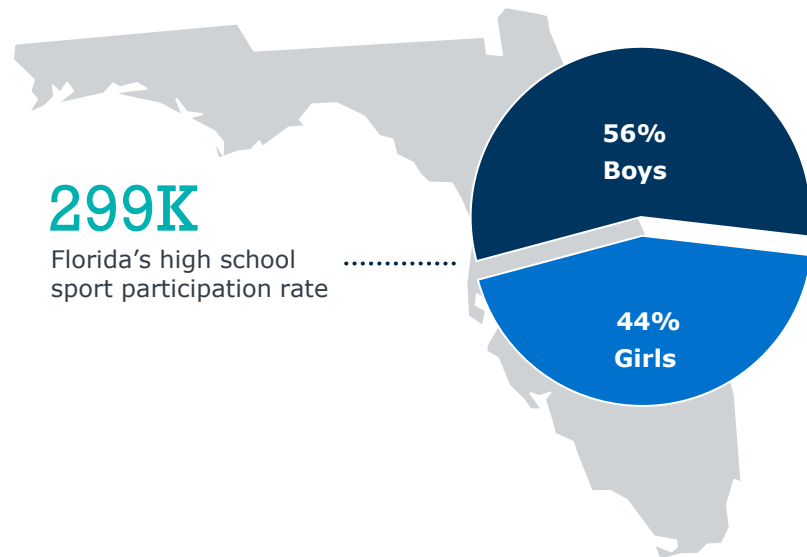
## State Profile: Florida

### Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2022-2023, the high school sports participation rate was just shy of 300,000 in Florida. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

### High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24

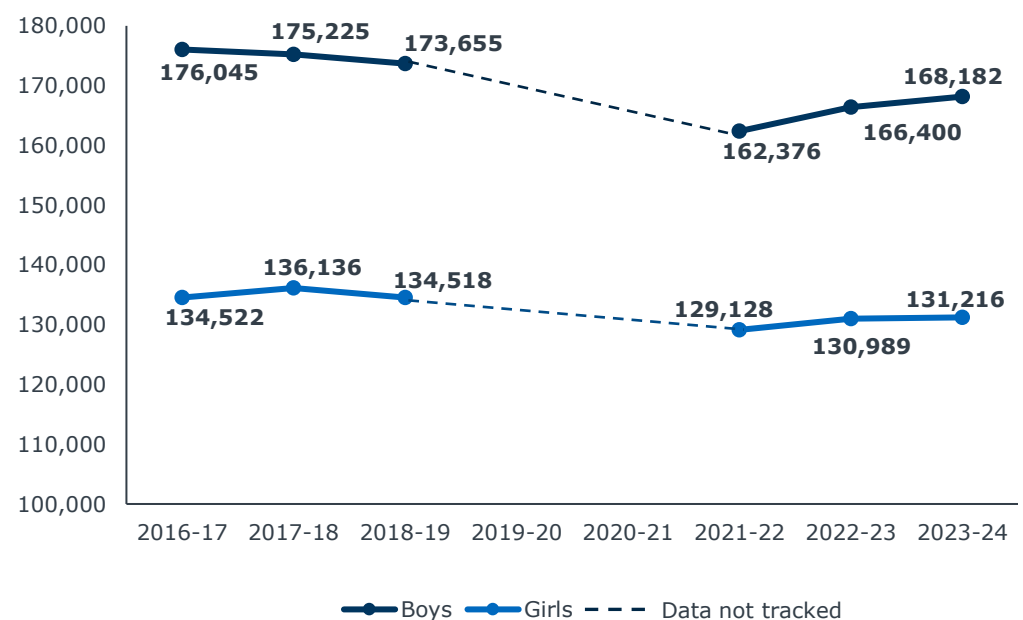
n=299,398 participation rate



### Gap Between Boys, Girls Expands After Pandemic

Participation in high school sports is growing among boys and girls over the last eight years and up from the first year after pandemic closures.

### Change in Girls and Boys Participation Rates, 2016-17 to 2023-24



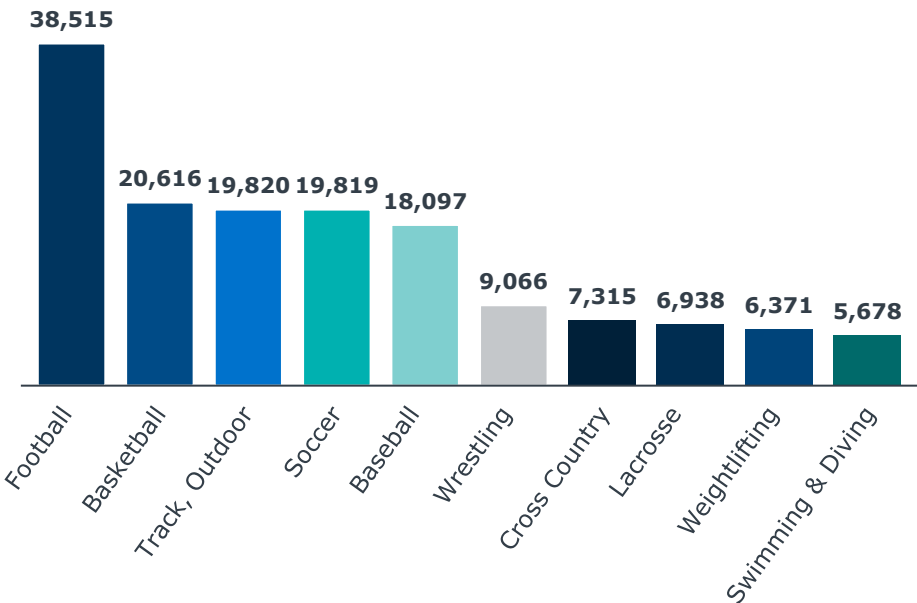
Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

# Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

## Football Takes Top Spot

Like many other states, football was the biggest boys sport as of 2023-2024. The top 10 biggest sports in Florida are similar to those nationally. The only exception was weightlifting, which is the ninth largest sport in Alabama and not in the op 10 nationally.

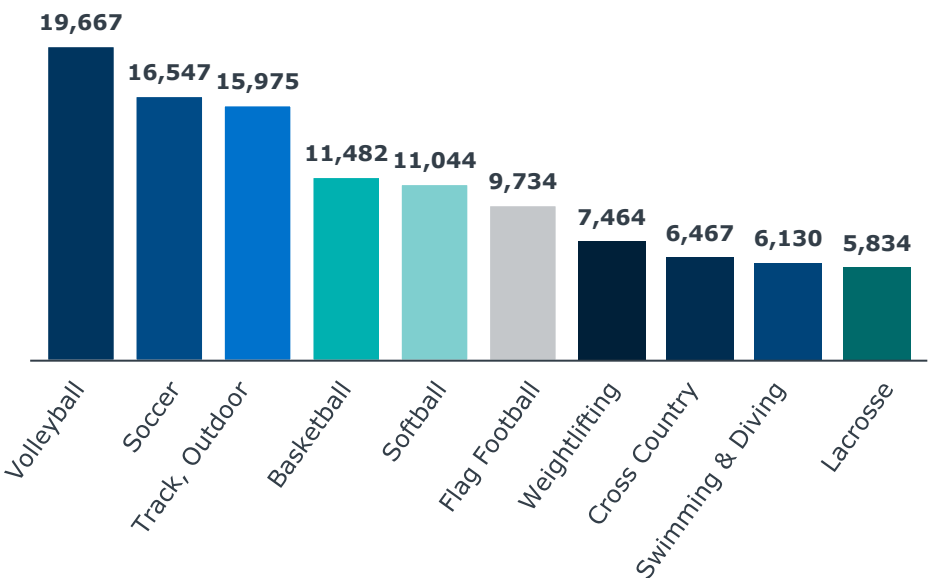
Top 10 Boys' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024  
n=168,182 participation rate



## Flag Football Emerging as a Popular Sport among Girls

The top girls' sports in Florida vary more from national trends. For example, flag football and weightlifting were among the top sports in the state and not in the top 10 nationally.

Top 10 Girls' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024  
n=131,216 participation rate



# Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

## Boys

### Areas of Consistent Growth

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

- Soccer
- Wrestling
- Weightlifting
- Golf
- Bowling

### Areas of Steady Decline

In comparison, participation has fallen in the last year and across the last eighty ears among four sports:

- Cross Country
- Lacrosse
- Swimming & Diving
- Tennis

Because the participation rate double counts multi-sport athletes, it is possible some of these declines may be attributed to growing specialization.

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Football,11-Player	38,515	2%	-11%
Basketball	20,616	2%	-6%
Track and Field, Outdoor	19,820	0%	3%
Soccer	19,819	3%	2%
Baseball	18,097	1%	-14%
Wrestling	9,066	9%	14%
Cross Country	7,315	-3%	-17%
Lacrosse	6,938	-2%	-2%
Weightlifting	6,371	4%	26%
Swimming & Diving	5,678	-4%	-24%
Tennis	4,732	-7%	-10%
Golf	4,448	1%	4%
Volleyball	3,958	-7%	44%
Bowling	1,561	2%	6%
Water Polo	942	-9%	79%
Competitive Spirit	291	-5%	29%
Adapted Track	15	N/A	50%

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

# Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

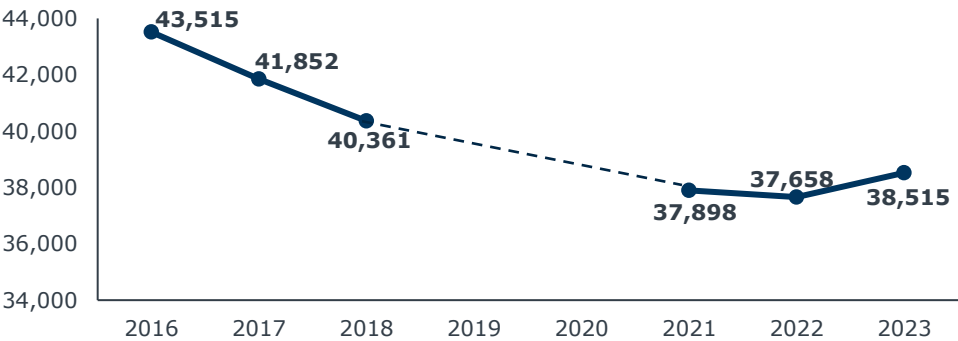
## Boys

### Biggest Sport

#### Steep Decline, But Signs of Recovery for Football

Participation in football increased 16% between 2016 and 2022, from 30,404 to 37,692. However, it is showing recent signs of decline. Participation fell 6% from 2022 to 2023.

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

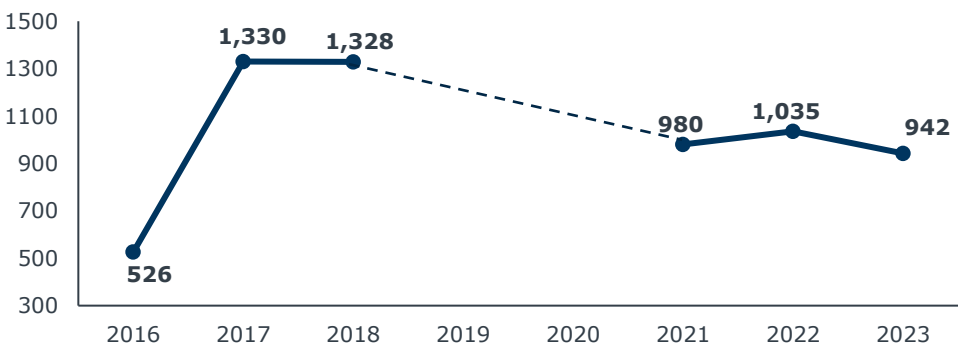


### Fastest Growth

#### Some Volatility, But Mostly Growth for Water Polo

Water polo is the fastest growing sport among boys, with a 79% increase between 2016 and 2023. Growth was fastest between 2016 and 2017, however, and has started to taper off.

Change in Boys Water Polo Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

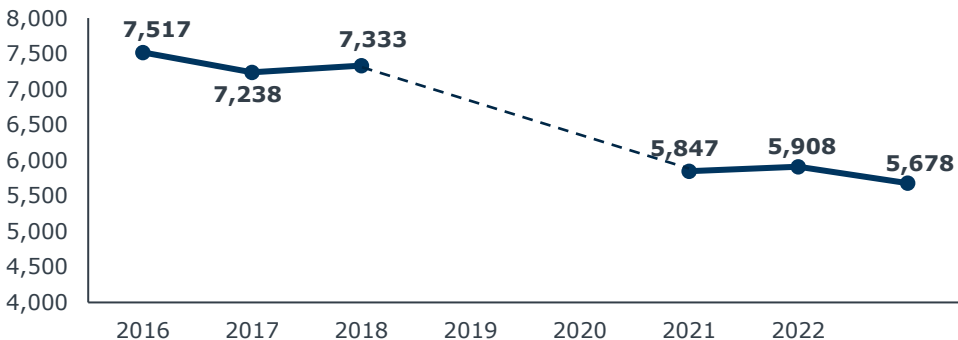


### Largest Decline

#### Swimming & Diving Not Recovering Since Pandemic

Participation in swimming & diving is down 24% since 2016. So far, participation has failed to rebound since the pandemic.

Change in Boys Swimming & Diving 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

There are four sports that grew both in the last year and across the last 10 years. This trend may signal emerging and/or sustainable recruitment areas. They included:

- Flag Football
- Football, 11-Player
- Weightlifting
- Wrestling

### Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Basketball
- Competitive Spirit
- Golf
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Softball
- Swimming & Diving
- Tennis
- Water Polo

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Volleyball	19,667	3%	-1%
Soccer	16,547	0%	-5%
Track and Field, Outdoor	15,975	-2%	-6%
Basketball	11,482	-8%	-18%
Softball, Fast Pitch	11,044	-4%	-14%
Flag Football	9,734	7%	25%
Weightlifting	7,464	7%	29%
Cross Country	6,467	2%	-22%
Swimming & Diving	6,130	-5%	-31%
Lacrosse	5,834	0%	7%
Tennis	5,327	-2%	-9%
Competitive Spirit	5,013	-8%	-10%
Beach Volleyball	3,599	18%	N/A
Golf	2,563	-1%	-1%
Wrestling	1,778	15%	397%
Bowling	1,598	7%	-3%
Water Polo	737	-8%	-40%
Football, 11-Player	233	118%	253%
Baseball	24	-56%	700%

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

# Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

## Girls

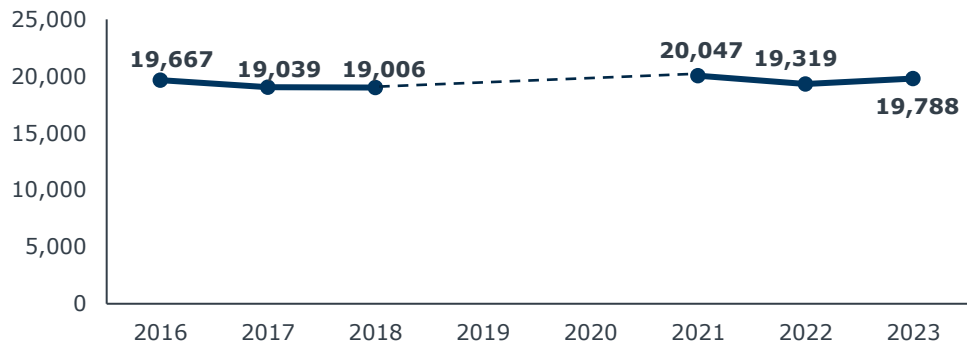
### Biggest Sport

#### Volleyball Participation

##### Mostly Flat

Participation in girls track is up 14% since 2013. It continues to grow after the pandemic, increasing 4% from 2021-22 to 2022-23.

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

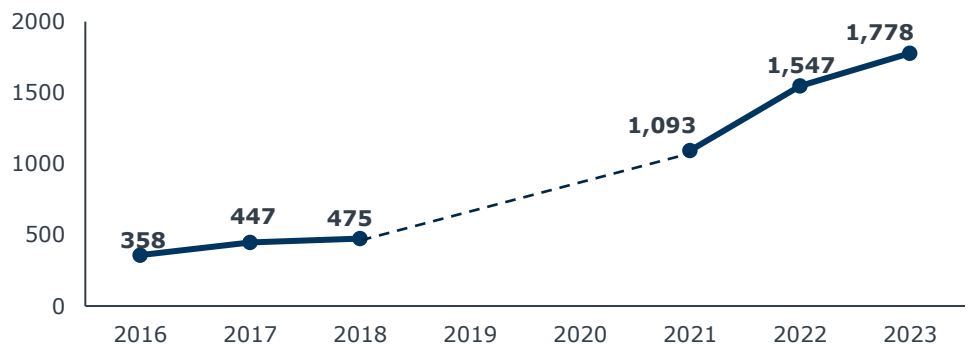


### Fastest Growth<sup>1</sup>

#### Wrestling Small but Growing Fast Among Girls

Wrestling shows signs of quick growth. After three years of slow but steady increases, participation has increased 274% since the year before the pandemic.

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

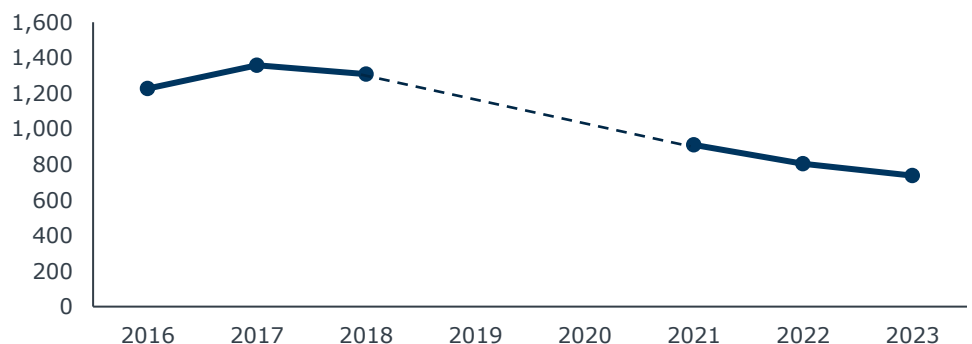


### Largest Decline

#### Steady Decline for Girls Water Polo

Participation in water polo has fallen 40% since 2016. The sport took a big hit during the pandemic and has continued to decline.

Change in Girls Water Polo Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24



1) Excludes Football, 11-player and baseball, which have less than 300 participants combined

# Appendix: About the Data

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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 and so on.
- 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
<b>Total Boys' Participation</b>	<b>4,638,785</b>

### 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
<b>Total Girls' Participation</b>	<b>3,423,517</b>

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