

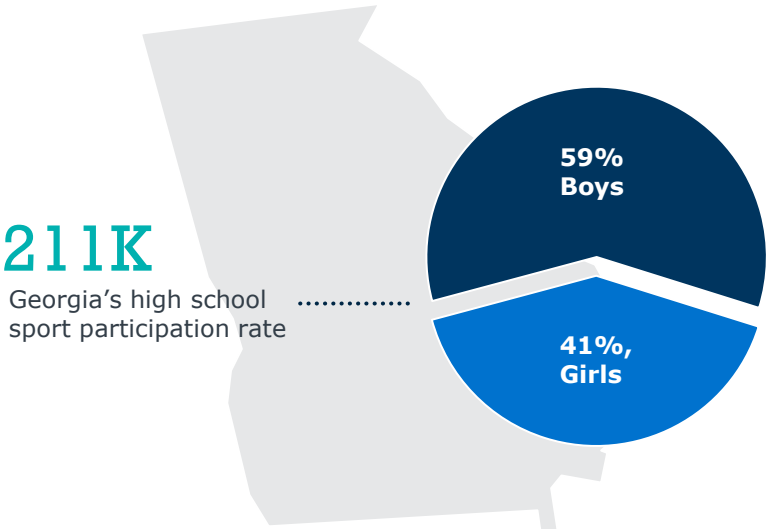
# High School Sports Participation State Profile

## State Profile: Georgia

### Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2022-2023, the high school sports participation rate was 211,375 in Georgia. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

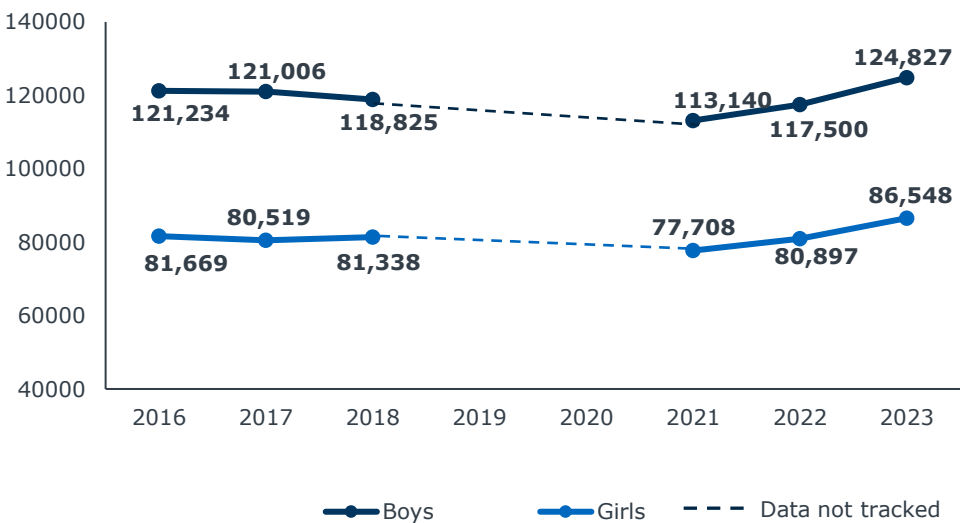
High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24  
n=211,375 participation rate



### Gap Between Boys, Girls Persists After Pandemic

Participation in high school sports is growing among boys and girls, but the gap in participation has remained largely the same.

Change in Participation Rates, 2013-14 to 2022-23



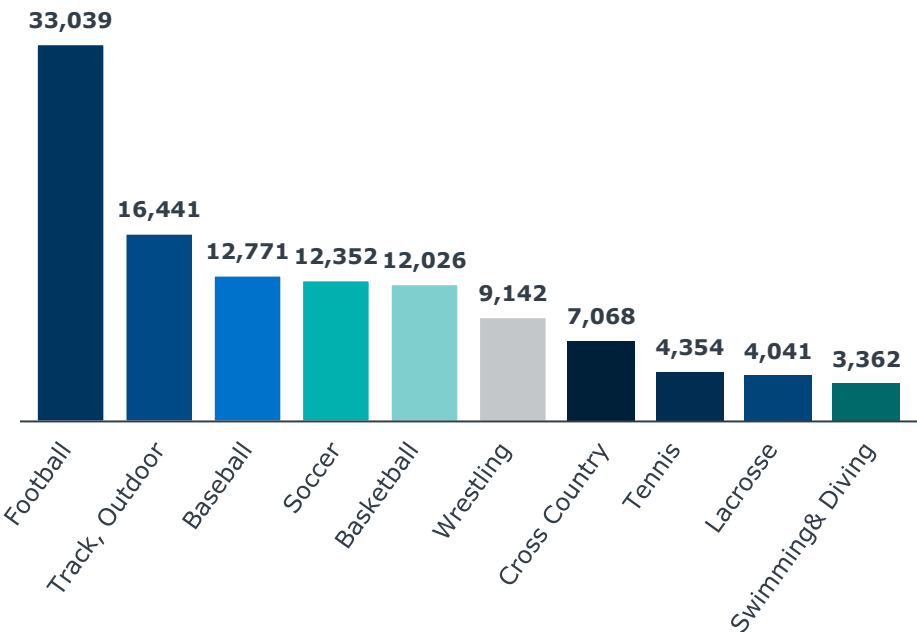
# Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

## Top Boys' Sports Mostly Mirror National Trends

Like most states, football was the biggest sport as of 2023-2024. The remaining top sports also reflect national trends. Otherwise, the biggest deviation was lacrosse, the ninth largest sport in the state.

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

n=124,827 participation rate

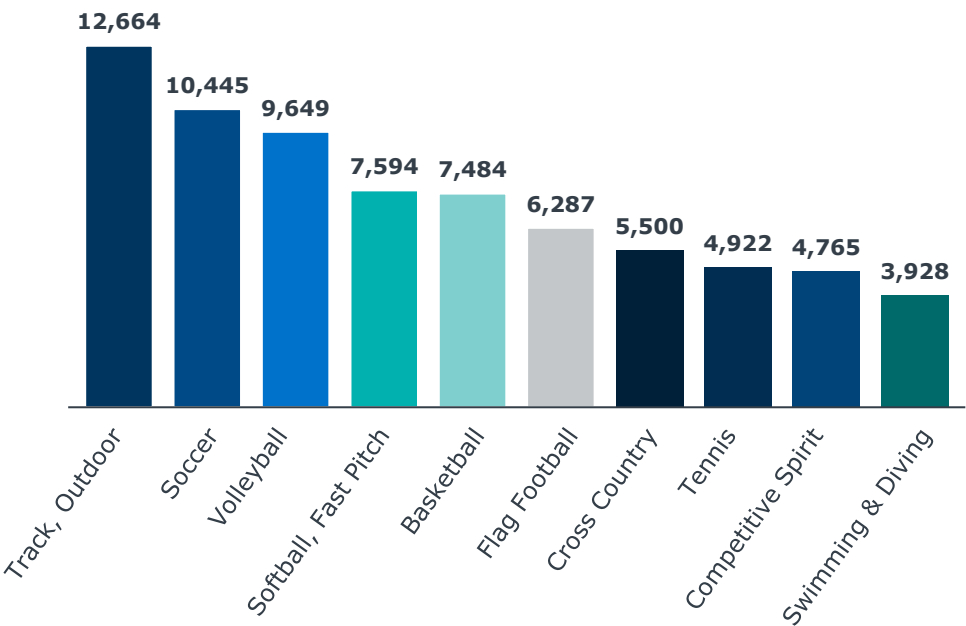


## Flag Football Emerging as a Popular Sport among Girls

The top girls' sports also mostly reflect national trends. The biggest deviation was flag football, the sixth largest sport in the state.

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

n=86,548 participation rate



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

# Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

## Boys

### Areas of Consistent Growth

Four 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:

- Baseball
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Soccer
- Wrestling

### Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Riflery

Sport	2022-2023 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Football, 11-Player	33,039	2%	-2%
Track and Field, Outdoor	16,441	3%	17%
Baseball	12,771	4%	1%
Soccer	12,352	4%	3%
Basketball	12,026	1%	-8%
Wrestling	9,142	10%	18%
Cross Country	7,068	3%	-12%
Tennis	4,354	-1%	N/A
Lacrosse	4,041	1%	0%
Swimming & Diving	3,362	0%	-12%
Golf	3,268	1%	-2%
eSports	2,563	13%	N/A
Weightlifting	1,530	N/A	-37%
Bass Fishing	985	N/A	N/A
Drill Team	896	N/A	N/A
Riflery	531	-13%	-31%
Fencing	130	N/A	N/A
Adapted Basketball	88	N/A	-44%
Dance	67	3%	-16%
Competitive Spirit	63	N/A	-51%
Adapted Track	59	N/A	-70%
Adapted Football	35	N/A	N/A
Adaptive Handball	16	N/A	N/A

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

# Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

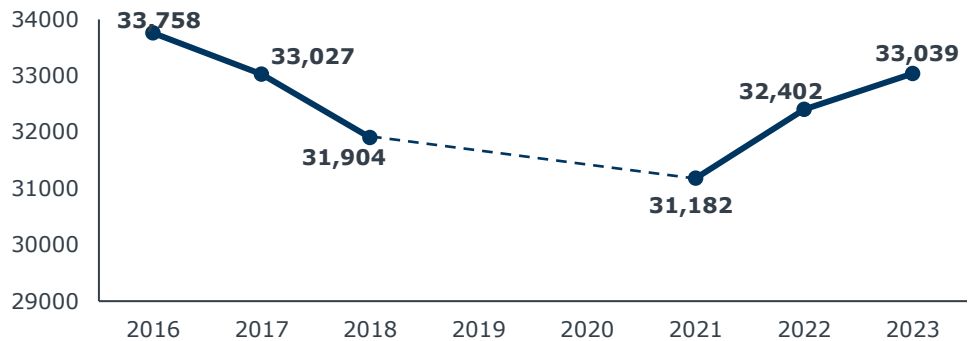
## Boys

### Biggest Sport

#### Football Recovering from Pre-Pandemic Decline

Participation in football decreased 2% between 2016 and 2023. However, it is showing signs of growth. Participation increased 6% from 2021 to 2023.

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

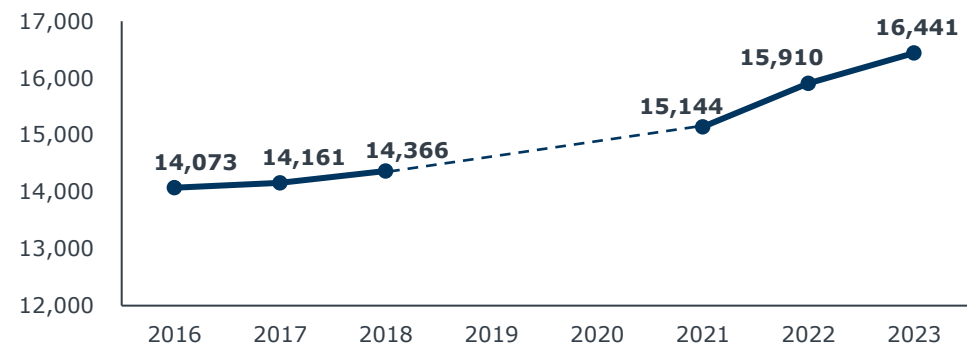


### Fastest Growth

#### Steady Growth in Outdoor Track and Field

Participation in outdoor track and field increased every year between 2016 and 2023, for total growth of 17%.

Change in Boys' Outdoor Track and Field Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

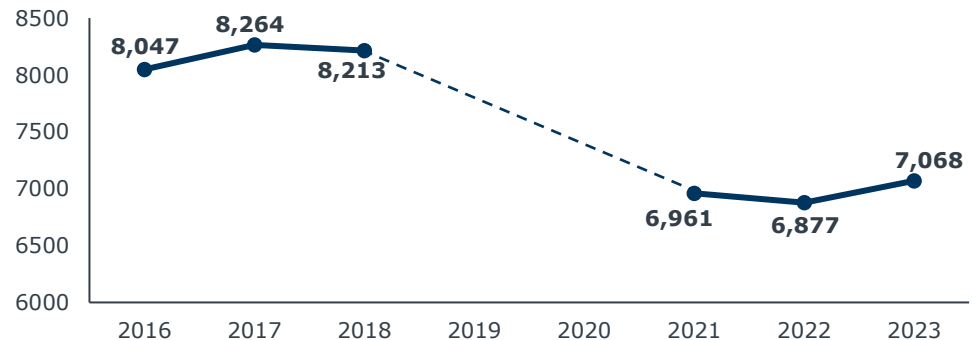


### Largest Decline<sup>1</sup>

#### Cross Country Growing Again After Steep Pandemic Decline

Participation in cross country declined 12% between 2016 and 2023. Most of the decline occurred during the pandemic.

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



1) Excludes sports with fewer than 500 participants and those with missing data in the years included in the analysis.

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

# Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

## Girls

### Areas of Consistent Growth

Six 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:

- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Softball, Slow Pitch
- Track and Field, Outdoor
- Volleyball
- Wrestling

### Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Adapted Track
- Basketball
- Dance
- Lacrosse
- Swimming & Diving

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Track and Field, Outdoor	12,664	5%	14%
Soccer	10,445	2%	-2%
Volleyball	9,649	4%	18%
Softball, Fast Pitch	7,594	9%	-7%
Basketball	7,484	-2%	-17%
Flag Football	6,287	28%	N/A
Cross Country	5,500	2%	-17%
Tennis	4,922	0%	-1%
Competitive Spirit	4,765	1%	-2%
Swimming & Diving	3,928	-1%	-18%
Lacrosse	3,327	-1%	-3%
Golf	1,978	4%	5%
Dance	1,915	-3%	-36%
Drill Team	1,563	N/A	-40%
Wrestling	1,560	37%	802%
Gymnastics	678	11%	45%
Weightlifting	545	N/A	-21%
Softball, Slow Pitch	506	2%	132%
Canoe Paddling	453	N/A	N/A
Riflery	437	12%	-13%
Bass Fishing	133	12%	N/A
Fencing	107	N/A	N/A
Adapted Track	42	-19%	-62%
Adapted Basketball	41	0%	-57%
Adapted Football	16	14%	N/A
Adaptive Handball	9	29%	N/A

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

# Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

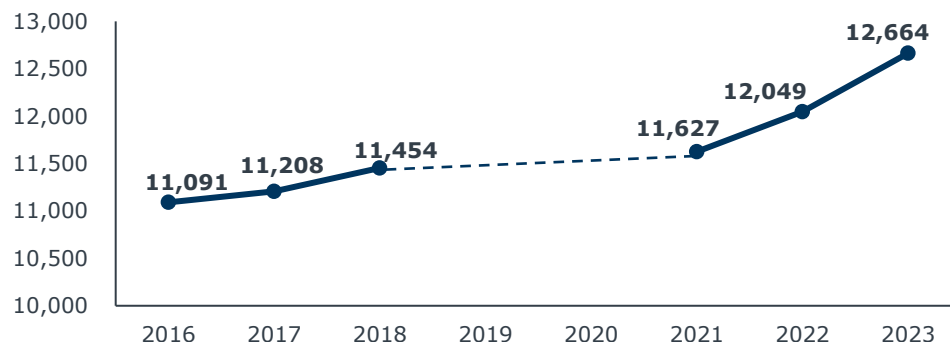
## Girls

### Biggest Sport

#### Consistent Growth in Track and Field

Participation in basketball grew every year since 2016, for a total increased of 14% by 2023.

Change in Girls' Outdoor Track and Field Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

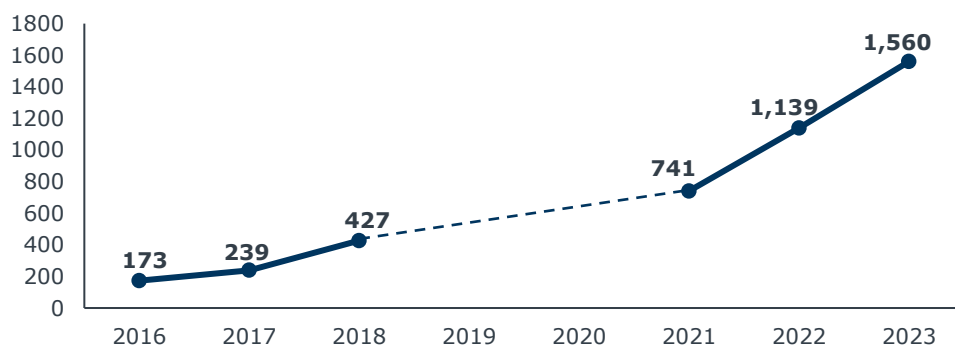


### Fastest Growth

#### Wrestling Small but Growing Fast Among Girls

Participation in wrestling grew every year between 2016 and 2023, for a total increase of 802%.

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

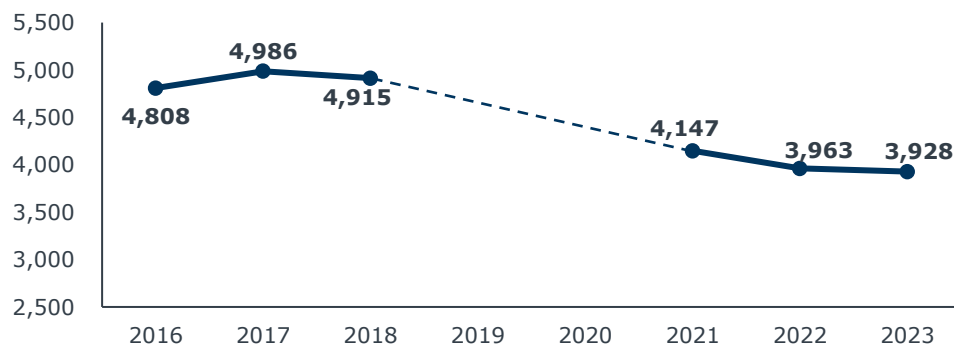


### Largest Decline<sup>1</sup>

#### Steady Decline in Swimming and Diving

Participation in swimming and diving declined every year but one between 2016 and 2023, for a total decreases of 18.

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



1) Excludes sports with fewer than 100 participants and those missing data from the years included in the analysis.

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

# 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.