

High School Sports Participation State Profile

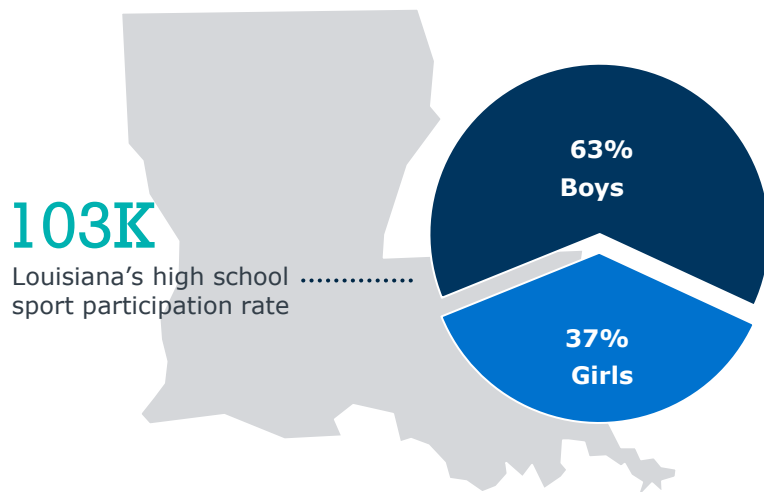
State Profile: Louisiana

Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2023-2024, the high school sports participation rate was just over 103,368 in Louisiana. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

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

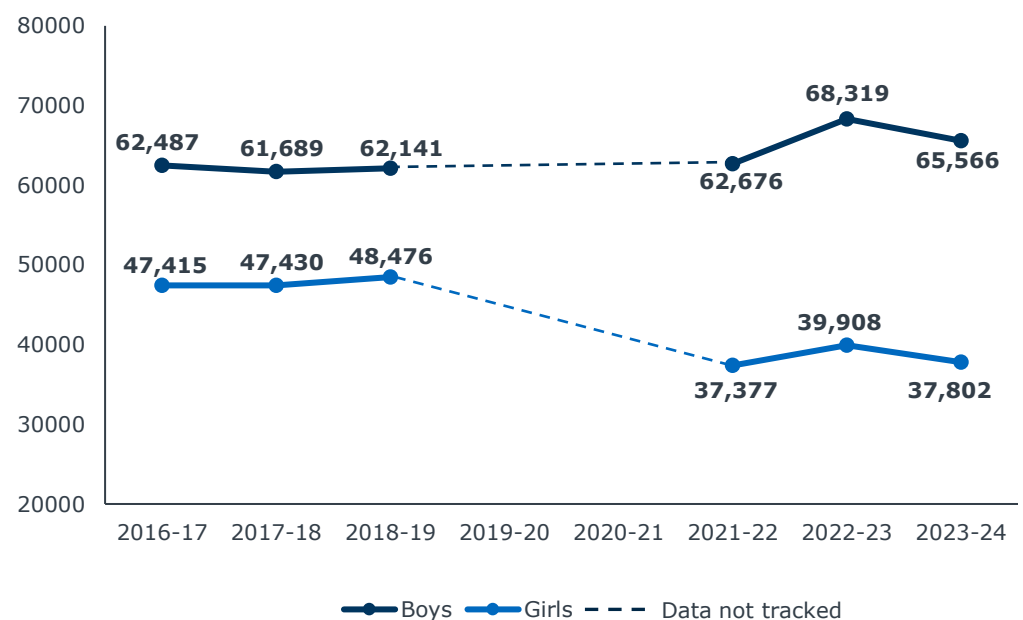
n=103,368 (total participation)



Gap Between Boys, Girls Widens After Pandemic

Participation in high school sports is growing slightly among boys and declining among girls over the last eight years. While the gap in participation was shrinking by 2018, it increased dramatically following the pandemic. Louisiana now has one of the biggest disparities in participation.

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



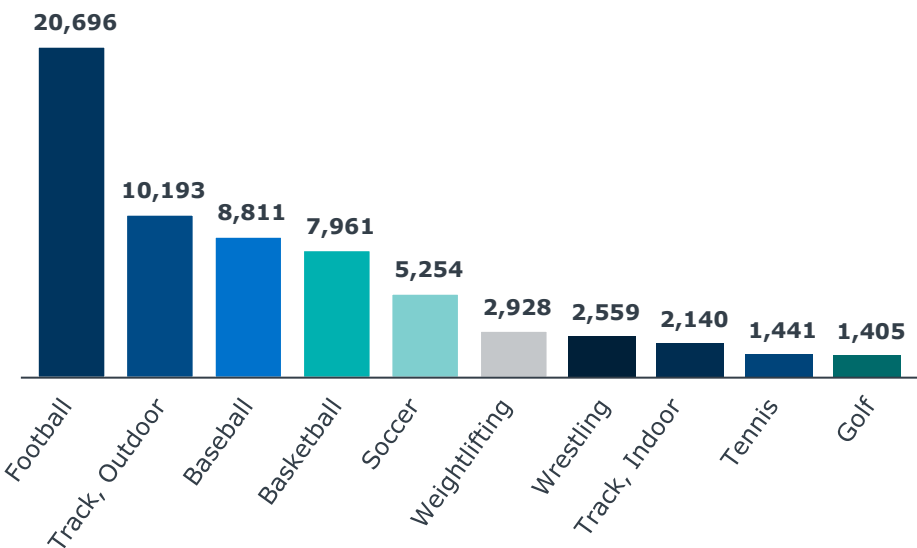
Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

Football Twice the Size of Next Biggest Sport

Like most states, football was the biggest boys' sport as of 2023-2024. Deviating from national trends, weightlifting was the 6th largest sport but comparatively small to the top five.

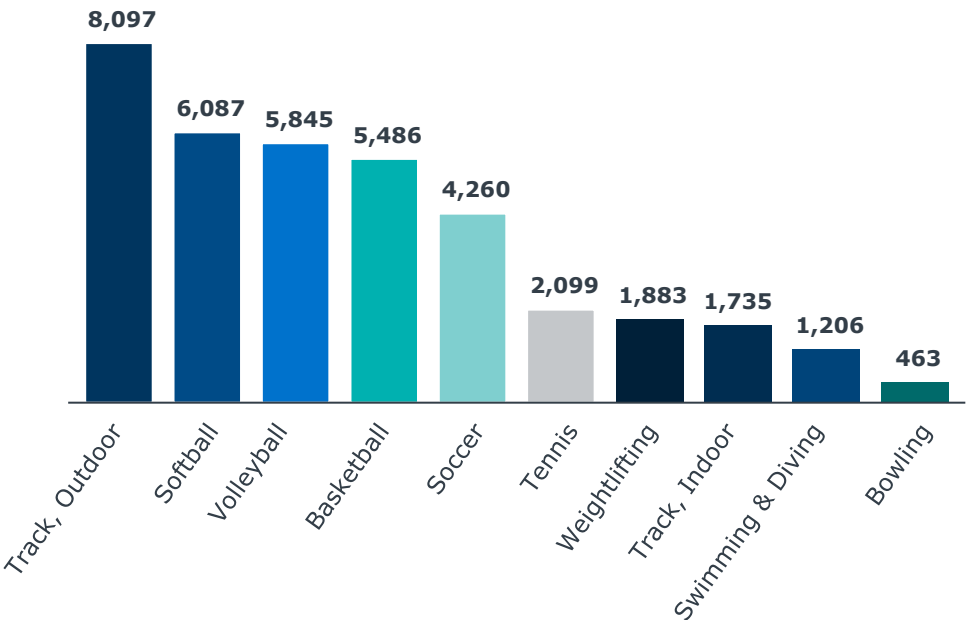
Top 10 Boys' Sports by Participation Rate, 2022-2023
n=65,566



Top Girls' Sports Reflect Trends Among Boys

Like boys, outdoor track was the largest sport in 2023. Indoor track was similarly in the top 10, as was weightlifting.

Top 10 Girls' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024
n=37,802



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:

- Bowling
- Golf
- Soccer
- Weightlifting
- Wrestling

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
- Gymnastics
- Swimming & Diving

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Football -- 11-Player	20,696	-2%	4%
Track and Field -- Outdoor	10,193	0%	11%
Baseball	8,811	-1%	3%
Basketball	7,961	-2%	-1%
Soccer	5,254	1%	6%
Weightlifting	2,928	9%	127%
Wrestling	2,559	18%	54%
Track and Field -- Indoor	2,140	-8%	31%
Tennis	1,441	-1%	2%
Golf	1,405	13%	29%
Swimming & Diving	1,065	-2%	-6%
Bowling	868	8%	46%
Bass Fishing	121	-62%	N/A
Esport	100	N/A	N/A
Gymnastics	24	-37%	-25%

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

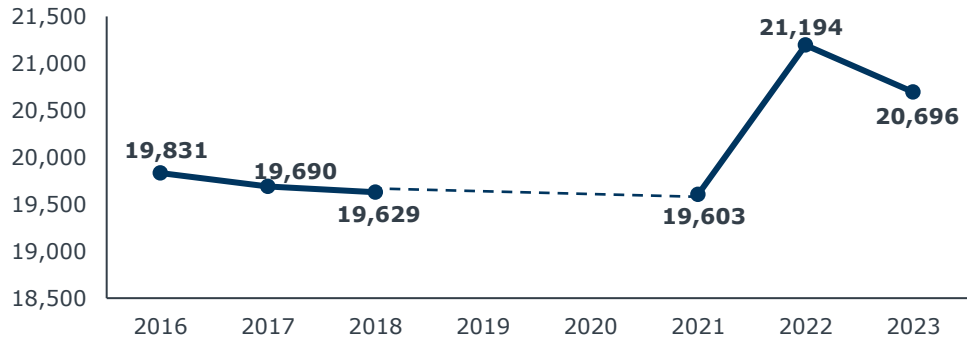
Boys

Biggest Sport

Football Growing After Slow Declines

Boys' participation in football increased 4% between 2016 and 2023. While the sport shrunk every year from 2016 to 2021, it saw faster growth in 2022.

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

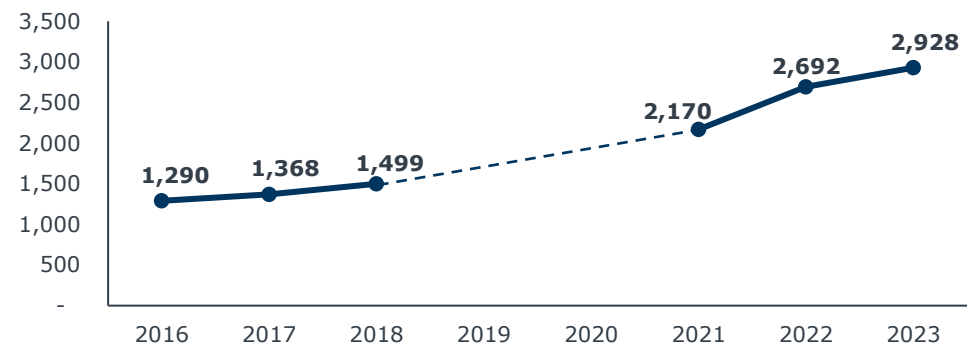


Fastest Growth

Steady Growth in Weightlifting

In contrast, participation in weightlifting has increased every year since 2016 for a total increase of 127%.

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

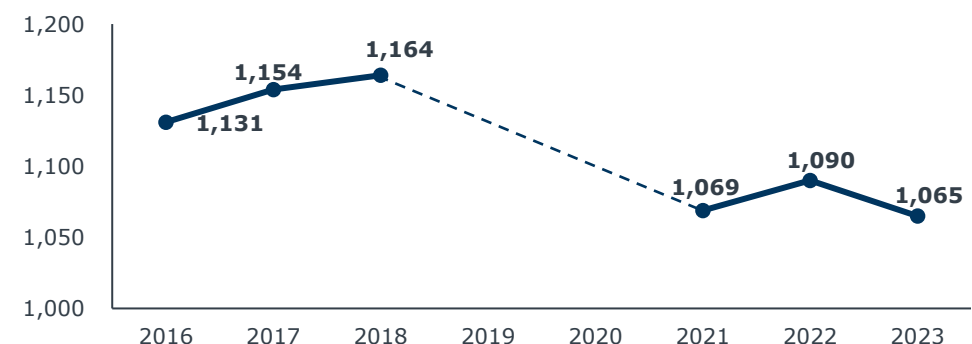


Largest Decline

Swimming Down After Pre-Pandemic Increases

Participation in swimming and diving dropped 6% between 2016 and 2023.

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

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:

- Bowling
- Indoor Track & Field
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Tennis
- Weightlifting

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.

- Basketball
- Football, 11-Player
- Softball
- Swimming & Diving
- Wrestling

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Track and Field, Outdoor	8,097	2%	17%
Softball, Fast Pitch	6,087	-3%	-2%
Volleyball	5,845	-1%	27%
Basketball	5,486	-1%	-1%
Soccer	4,260	0%	7%
Tennis	2,099	1%	15%
Weightlifting	1883	13%	132%
Track and Field, Indoor	1,735	8%	56%
Swimming & Diving	1206	-3%	-11%
Bowling	463	11%	11%
Golf	386	-9%	38%
Gymnastics	210	-2%	26%
Bass Fishing	15	-40%	N/A
Wrestling	15	-87%	-25%
eSports	10	N/A	N/A
Football, 11-Player	5	-86%	-83%

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

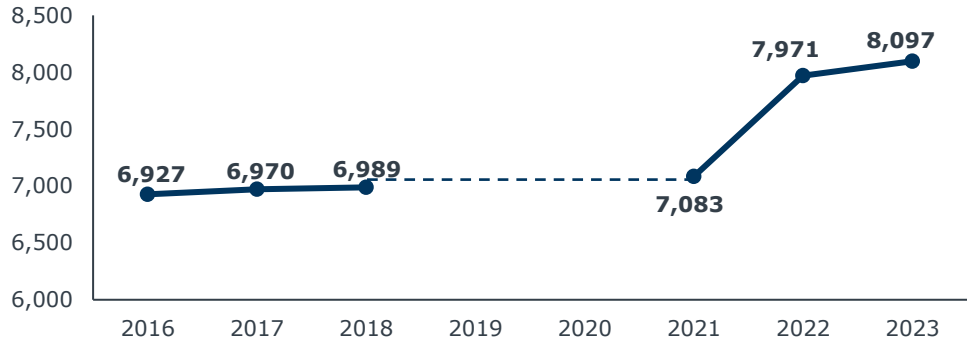
Girls

Biggest Sport

Quickening Growth for Track and Field

Participation in girls track is up 17% since 2016. Participation grew fastest between 2021 and 2022.

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

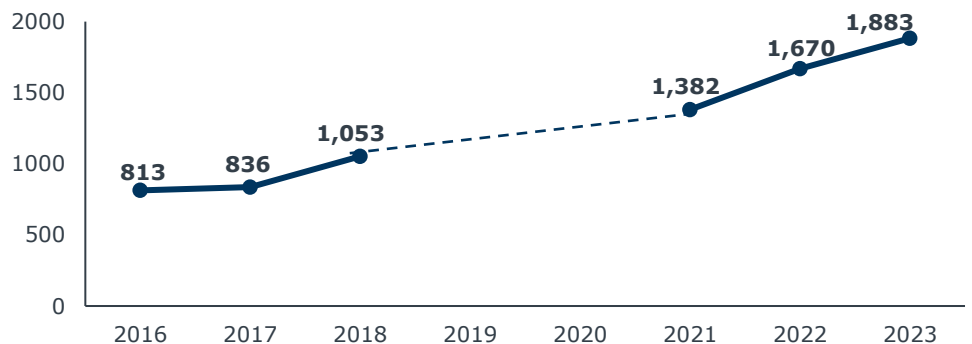


Fastest Growth

Steady Growth in Weightlifting

Participation in weightlifting has increased every year since 2016 for a total increase of 132%.

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

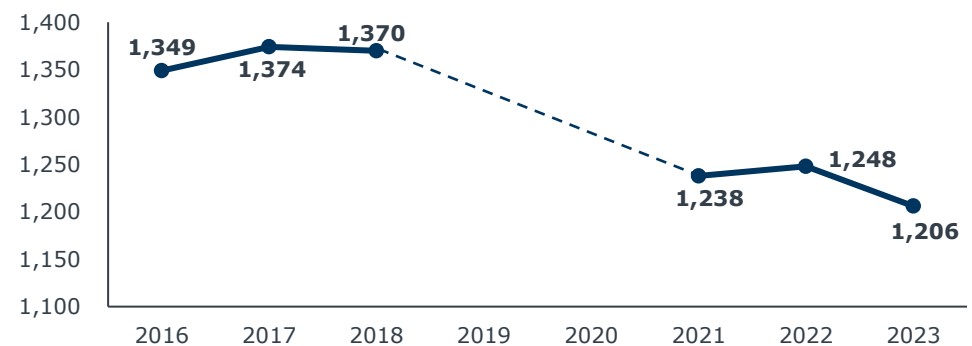


Largest Decline

Swimming and Diving Takes Hit After the Pandemic

Participation in swimming and diving dropped 11% between 2016 and 2023, with the largest decrease occurring in 2021.

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 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
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.