

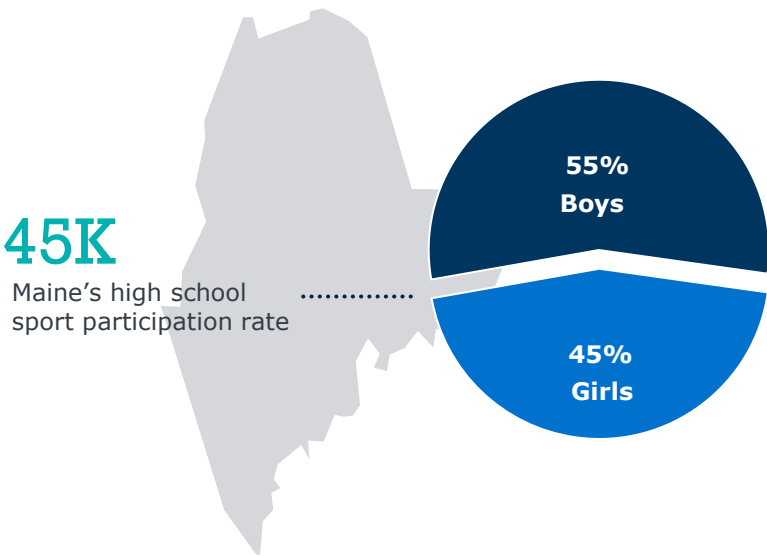
# High School Sports Participation State Profile

## State Profile: Maine

### Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2023-2024, the high school sports participation rate was 45,592 in Maine. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

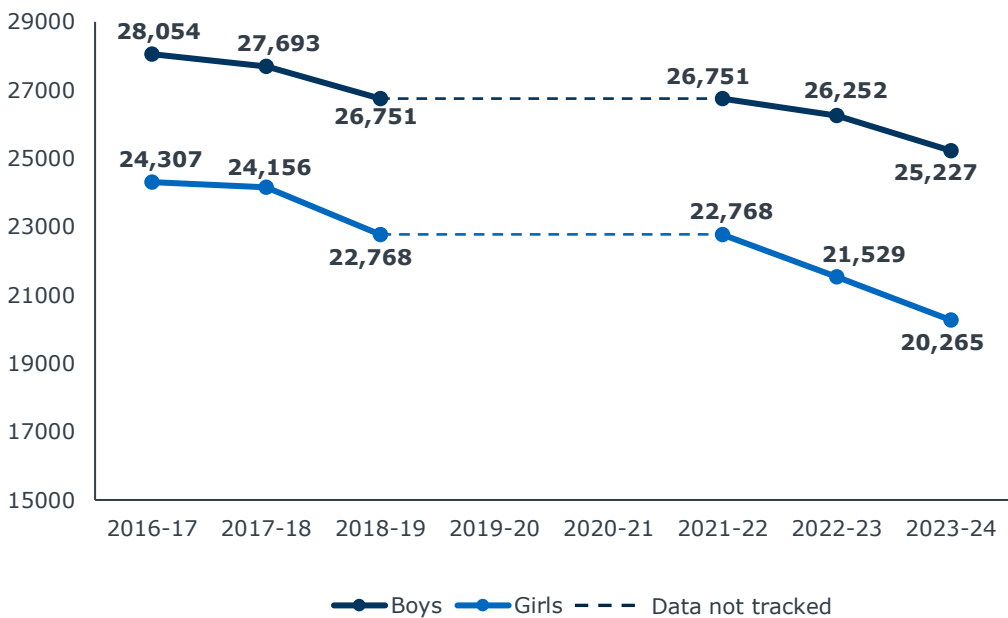
High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24  
n=45,492 (total participation)



### Participation on the Decline

Participation in high school sports has declined almost every year among boys and girls. While participation increased slightly after the pandemic, rates overall are down 10% for boys and about 17% for girls since 2016.

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

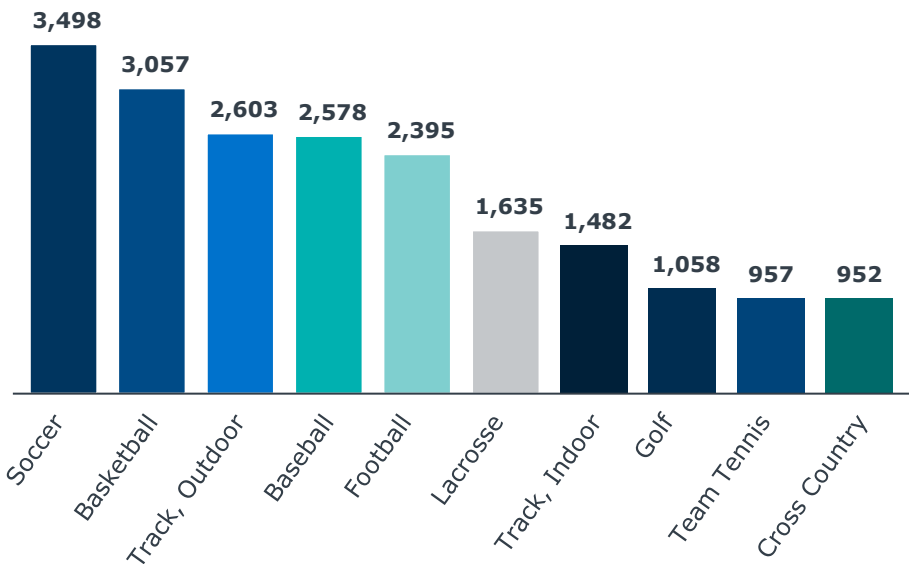


# Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

## Four Sports Surpass Football Participation

Unlike most states, soccer was the biggest boys' sport as of 2023-2024. Football, which is the biggest sport nationally, is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest in Maine.

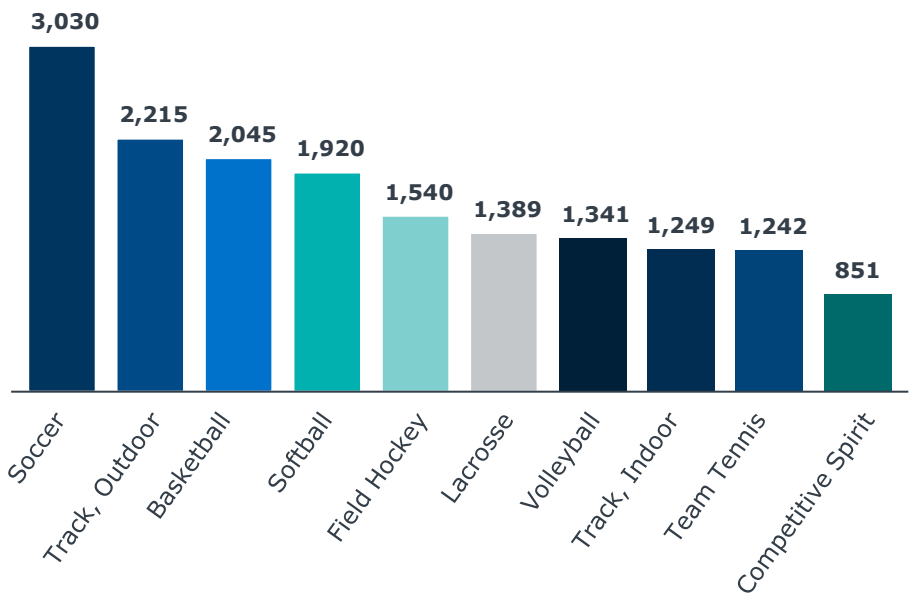
Top 10 Boys' Sports by Participation Rate, 2022-2023  
n=25,227



## Soccer Also the Top Girls' Sport

Like boys, soccer was the biggest sport among girls in 2023-2024. In contrast, volleyball – the largest sport nationally – was 7<sup>th</sup> in Maine.

Top 10 Girls' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024  
n=20,265



# Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

## Boys

### Areas of Consistent Growth

Two 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
- Wrestling

### Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Alpine skiing
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Cross Country Skiing
- Lacrosse
- Soccer
- Team Tennis

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Soccer	3,498	-7%	-17%
Basketball	3,057	-5%	-16%
Track and Field, Outdoor	2,603	3%	-10%
Baseball	2,578	-7%	-20%
Football, 11-Player	2,395	4%	-34%
Lacrosse	1635	-8%	-10%
Track and Field, Indoor	1,482	14%	-9%
Golf	1,058	-14%	2%
Team Tennis	957	-15%	-19%
Cross Country	952	-19%	-25%
Football, 8-player	951	19%	N/A
Wrestling	875	15%	26%
Ice Hockey	791	-20%	-30%
Unified Basketball	476	3%	N/A
Swimming & Diving	368	13%	-40%
Skiing, Alpine	302	-22%	-17%
Skiing, Cross Country	232	-5%	-8%
eSport	226	3%	N/A
Volleyball	131	8%	143%
Ultimate Frisbee	107	78%	N/A

1) Excludes sports with fewer than 100 participants

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

# Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

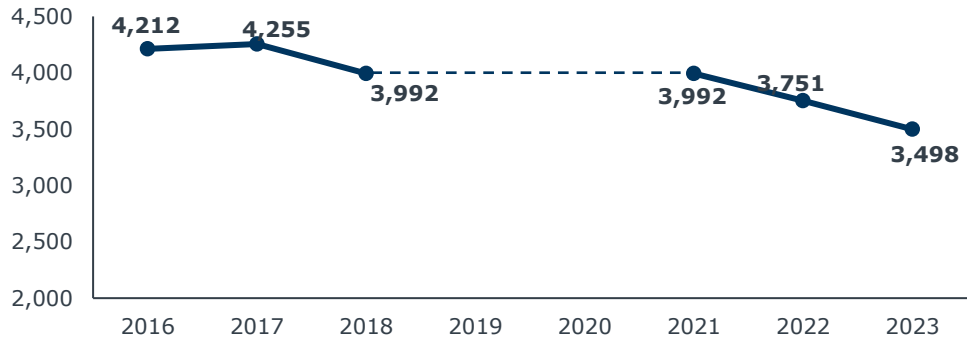
## Boys

### Biggest Sport

#### Steady Decline for Soccer

Participation in soccer declined almost every year between 2016 and 2023, with a total drop of 7%.

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

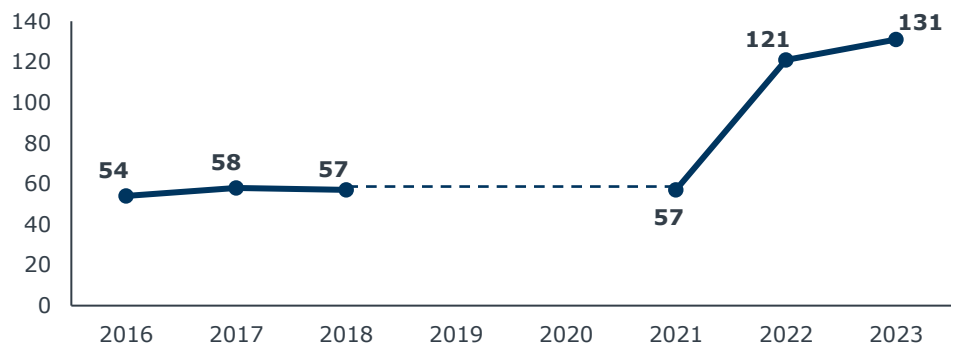


### Fastest Growth

#### Volleyball Small But Growing Quickly

After several years of minimal change, participation in volleyball has increased rapidly since 2021. While up 143% since 2016, the participation rate is still just 131.

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

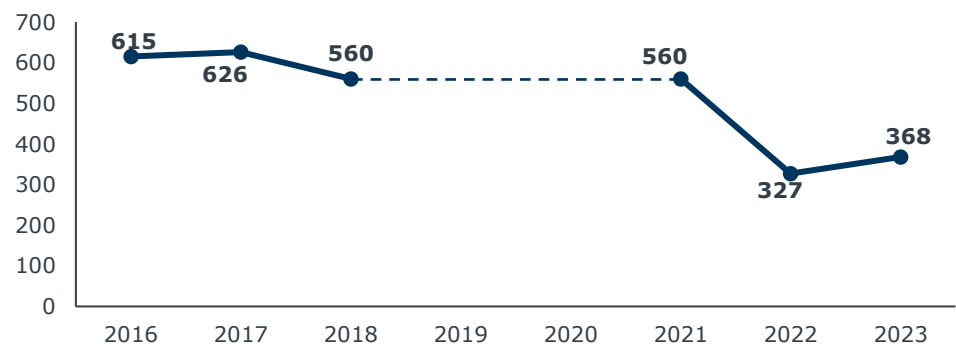


### Largest Decline

#### Swimming and Diving Nearly Cut in Half

Participation in swimming and diving fell 40% between 2016 and 2023. However, it saw a 13% jump from 2022 to 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

Two 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
- Wrestling

### Areas of Steady Decline

In comparison, participation fell in the last year and across the last eight years among 13 sports. Soccer

- Basketball
- Competitive Spirit
- Cross Country
- Field Hockey
- Golf
- Ice Hockey
- Lacrosse
- Softball
- Swimming & Diving
- Team Tennis
- Skiing, Alpine
- Skiing, Cross country

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Soccer	3,030	-5%	-16%
Track and Field, Outdoor	2,215	4%	-13%
Basketball	2,045	-7%	-27%
Softball, Fast Pitch	1,920	-7%	-27%
Field Hockey	1540	-23%	-30%
Lacrosse	1389	-7%	-2%
Volleyball	1,341	1%	37%
Track and Field, Indoor	1,249	13%	-14%
Team Tennis	1242	-15%	-25%
Competitive Spirit	851	-2%	-41%
Cross Country	804	-4%	-31%
Swimming & Diving	465	-10%	-48%
Unified Basketball	373	-3%	N/A
Ice Hockey	350	-14%	-20%
Skiing, Alpine	276	-9%	-8%
Skiing, Cross Country	217	-11%	-12%
Wrestling	131	41%	115%
Golf	102	-18%	-22%

1) Excludes sports with fewer than 100 participants

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

# Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

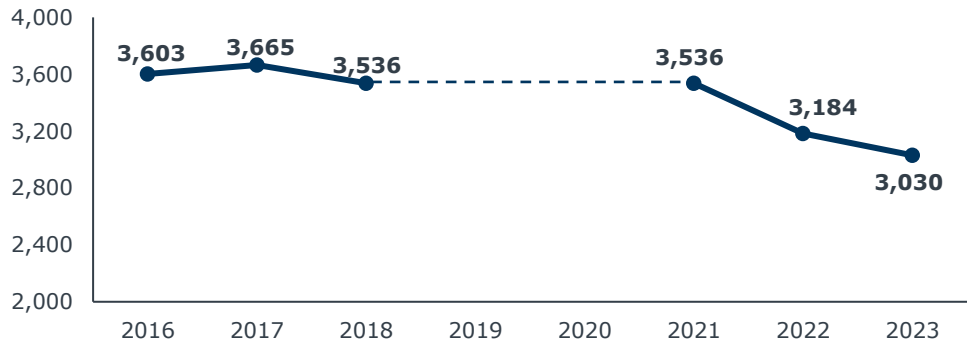
## Girls

### Biggest Sport

#### Soccer Declines Picking Up Pace in Maine

Participation in soccer – the largest girls' sport in Maine – is down 16% since 2016. The largest drop happened between 2021 and 2022.

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

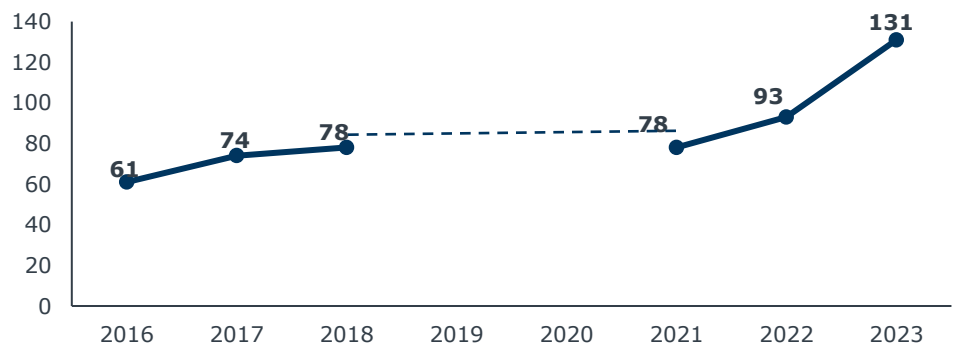


### Fastest Growth

#### Wrestling Small but Growing Fast Among Girls

Wrestling participation has increased almost every year since 2016, with 115% total growth.

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

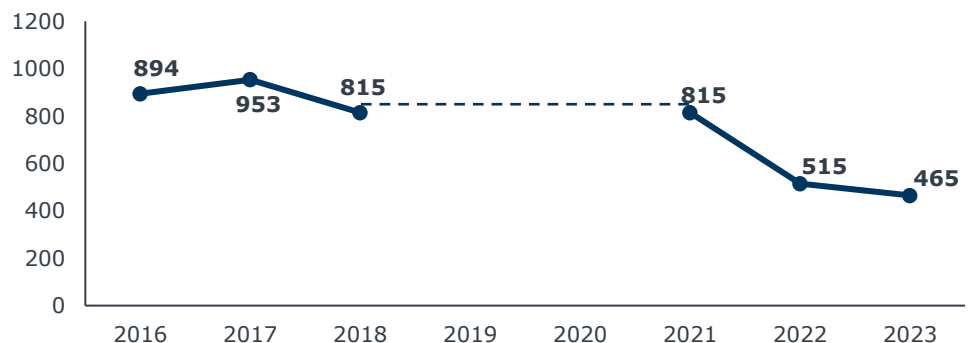


### Largest Decline

#### Swimming and Diving Down Nearly 50%

Like boys, participation in girls' swimming and diving fell by nearly half between 2016 and 2023, with 48% total decline.

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

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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.