

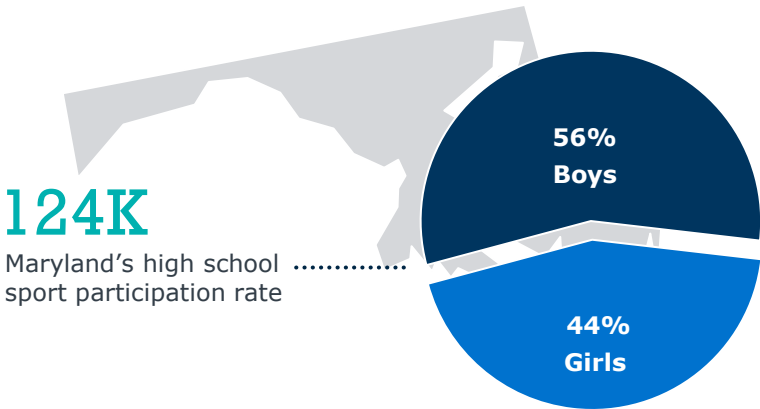
High School Sports Participation State Profile

State Profile: Maryland

Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2023-2024, the high school sports participation rate was 124,296 in Maryland. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

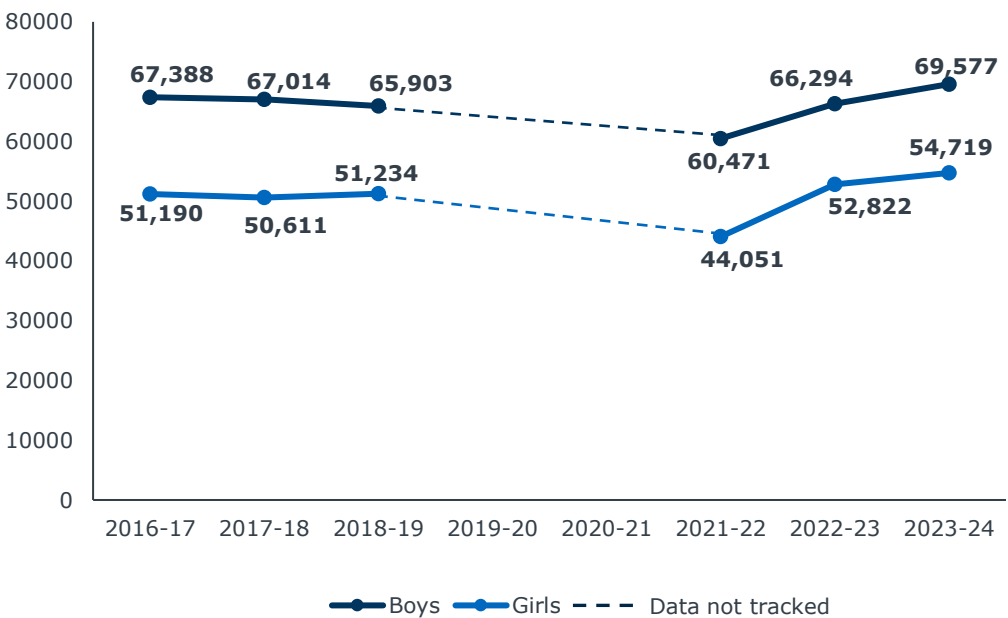
High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24
n=124,296 (total participation)



Gap Between Boys, Girls Persists After Pandemic

Participation in high school sports is up slightly among boys and girls over the last eight years and has increased more quickly since the pandemic.

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



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

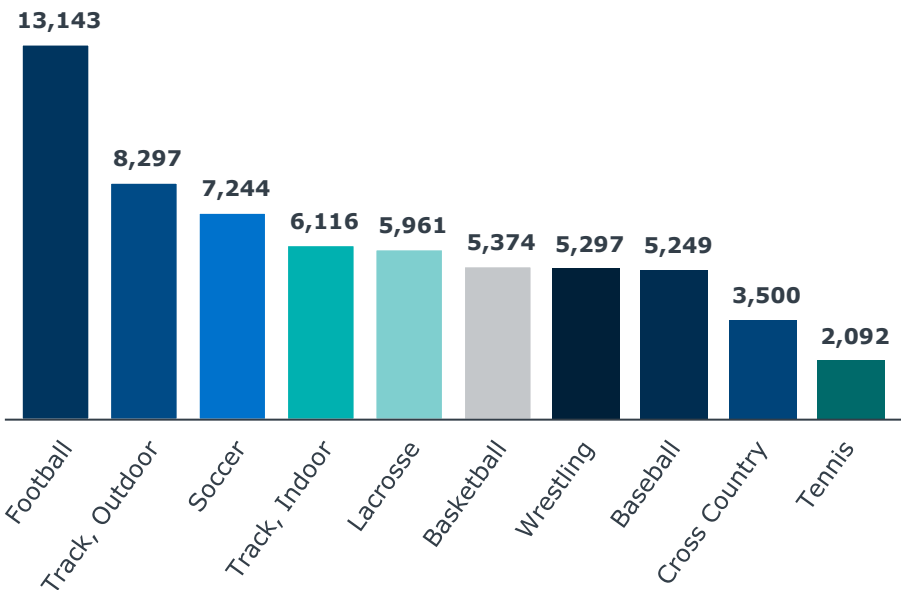
Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

Football the Largest Sport, Track in the Top 10 Twice

Like most states, football was the biggest boys' sport as of 2023-2024. Meanwhile, all three running-specific sports were in the top 10.

Top 10 Boys' Sports by Participation Rate, 2022-2023

n = 69,577 (boys' participation rate)

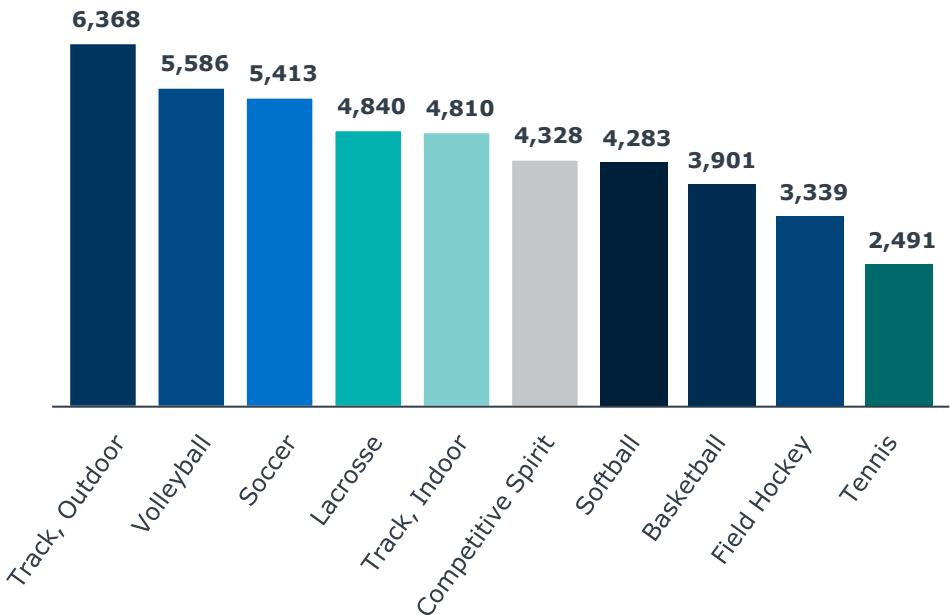


Track Takes Two Spots in Top 10

Like boys, both indoor and outdoor track were in the top 10 sports in 2023-2024. The biggest deviation from national trends was field hockey, which is the 9th largest sport in Maryland and not in the top 10 nationally.

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

n = 54,719 (girls' participation rate)



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:

- Outdoor Track & Field

Areas of Steady Decline

In contrast, no sports have decreased in both the last year and across the last eight years.

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Football, 11-Player	13,143	3%	-2%
Track and Field, Outdoor	8,297	4%	16%
Soccer	7,244	6%	7%
Track and Field, Indoor	6,116	11%	16%
Lacrosse	5,961	5%	-7%
Basketball	5,374	2%	-2%
Wrestling	5,297	16%	24%
Baseball	5,249	2%	-4%
Cross Country	3,500	9%	-6%
Tennis	2,092	3%	-2%
Swimming & Diving	1,777	8%	-4%
Golf	1,274	-3%	2%
Volleyball	737	-3%	9%
Adapted Bocce Indoor	691	-26%	18%
Adapted Bowling	554	0%	-8%
Unified Bocce	360	N/A	N/A
Adapted Tennis	309	-2%	N/A
Adapted Softball	279	-16%	21%
Unified Track and Field, Outdoor	270	N/A	N/A
Badminton	202	-61%	6%

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

Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

Boys, Continued

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Adapted Soccer	184	15%	-39%
Adapted Corn Toss	120	275%	N/A
Adapted Strength Training	117	52%	N/A
Adapted Basketball	86	56%	-63%
Competitive Spirit	67	2%	N/A
Unified Flag Football	56	N/A	N/A
Gymnastics	54	980%	N/A
Bowling	42	-19%	50%
Adapted Golf	22	-37%	N/A
Unified Cycling	21	N/A	N/A
Adapted Handball	19	-72%	N/A
Flag Football	5	N/A	N/A
Dance	1	N/A	N/A
Field Hockey	1	N/A	N/A
Softball, Fast Pitch	1	-94%	N/A

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

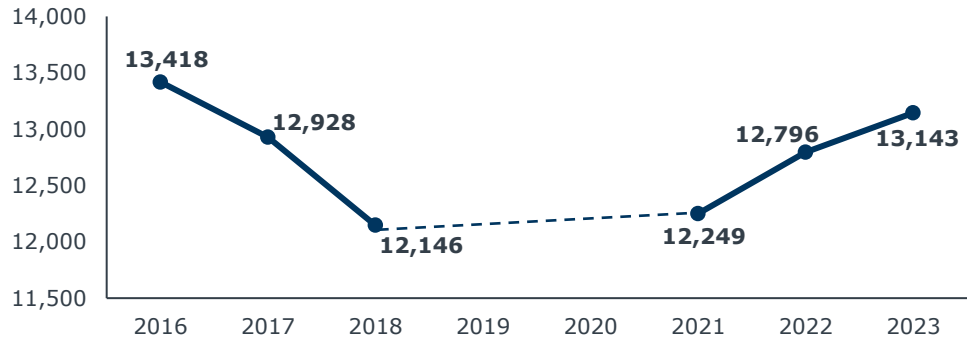
Boys

Biggest Sport

Football Growing After Pre-Pandemic Declines

Overall, participation in football is down slightly from 2016. However, it has grown every year since 2018, nearing earlier levels.

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

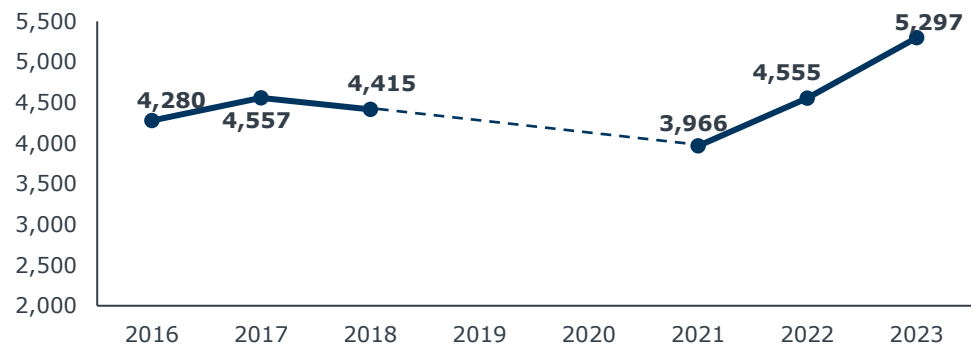


Fastest Growth

Quickening Growth in Wrestling

Like football, wrestling participation has been increase over the last several years, with total growth of 24% since 2016.

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

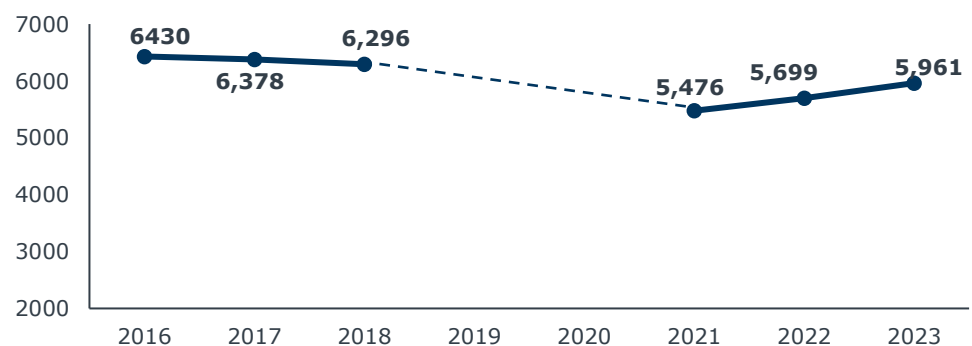


Largest Decline¹

Lacrosse Down But Showing Signs of Growth

Participation in lacrosse is down 7% since 2016. However, it has grown every year since 2021.

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



1) Excludes sports with fewer than 200 participants

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:

- Ice Hockey
- Indoor Track & Field
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Tennis
- 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 Soccer
- Adapted Track
- Badminton
- Basketball
- Gymnastics

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Track and Field, Outdoor	6,368	4%	11%
Volleyball	5,586	6%	7%
Soccer	5,413	2%	-8%
Lacrosse	4840	4%	-9%
Track and Field, Indoor	4,810	8%	7%
Competitive Spirit	4328	-8%	N/A
Softball, Fast Pitch	4,283	5%	-11%
Basketball	3,901	-1%	-10%
Field Hockey	3339	1%	-14%
Tennis	2,491	3%	7%
Cross Country	2,352	5%	-13%
Swimming & Diving	1988	4%	-15%
Wrestling	769	41%	406%
Adapted Bocce Indoor	628	-32%	4%
Adapted Bowling	480	6%	-8%
Badminton	471	-32%	-13%
Golf	387	-2%	28%
Unified Bocce	368	N/A	N/A
Adapted Tennis	365	10%	N/A
Unified Track and Field, Outdoor	296	N/A	N/A

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

Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

Girls, Continued

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Adapted Softball	216	-12%	29%
Adapted Soccer	114	-10%	-42%
Gymnastics	100	-3%	-31%
Adapte Corn Toss	99	313%	N/A
Adapted Strength Training	87	53%	N/A
Adapted Track	83	-65%	-66%
Adapted Basketball	66	65%	-69%
Bowling	33	-13%	18%
Baseball	28	-35%	600%
Football, 11-Player	28	-13%	211%
Unified Cycling	14	N/A	N/A
Ice Hockey	12	9%	500%
Adapted Golf	11	-54%	N/A
Adapted Handball	4	-83%	N/A

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

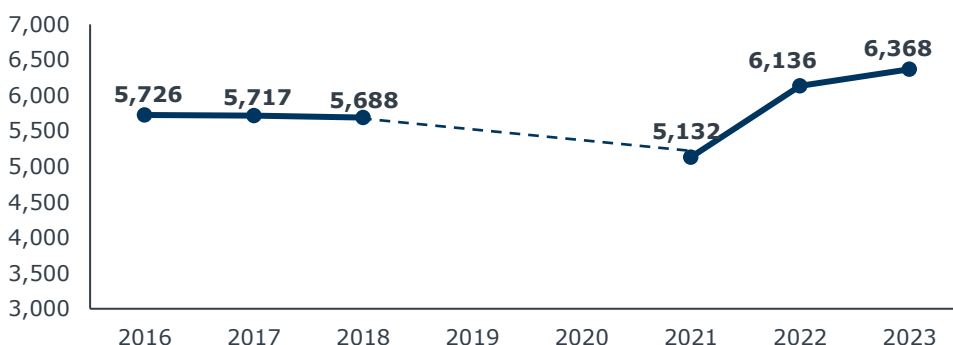
Girls

Biggest Sport

Track Rebounds After Pandemic Slide

Participation in track and field fell slightly every year between 2016 and 2021. However, fast growth since then has resulted in 11% higher participation as of 2023-24.

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

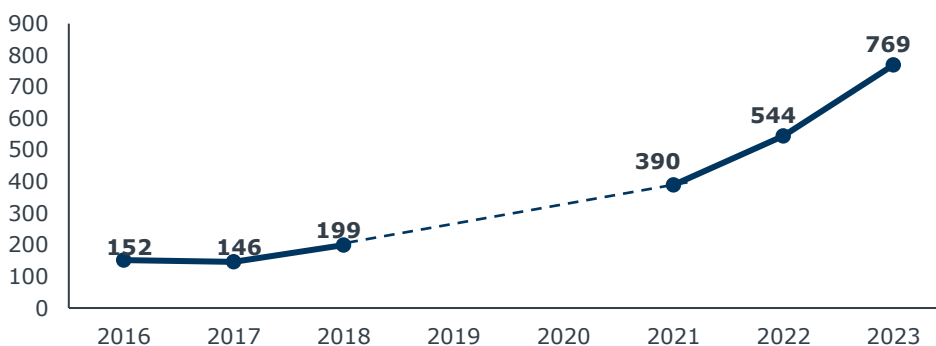


Fastest Growth¹

Rapid Growth in Wrestling

Like many other states, participation in wrestling small but growing fast. Between 2016 and 2023, participation increased 406%.

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

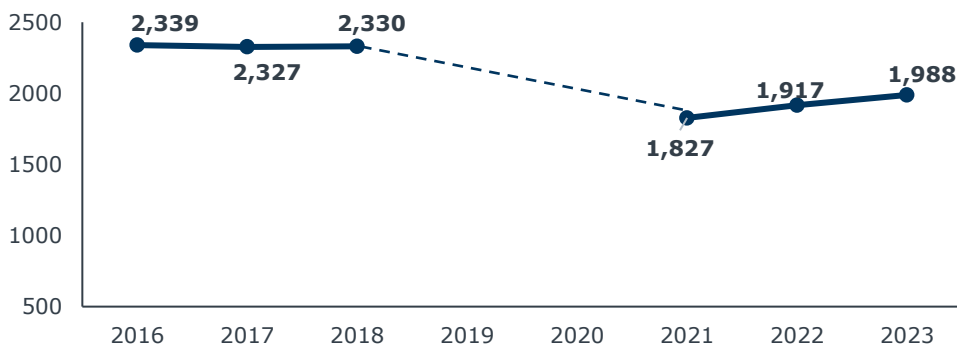


Largest Decline¹

Swimming Recovering from Pandemic Decline

Participation in swimming and diving fell 15% between 2016 and 2023. However, it has shown signs of growth over the last several years.

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



1) Excludes sports with fewer than 200 participants

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.