

# High School Sports Participation State Profile

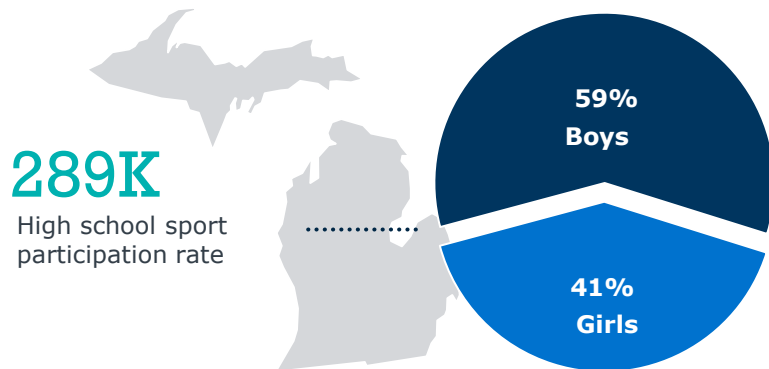
## State Profile: Michigan

### Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2023-2024, the high school sports participation rate in Michigan was 289,740. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

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

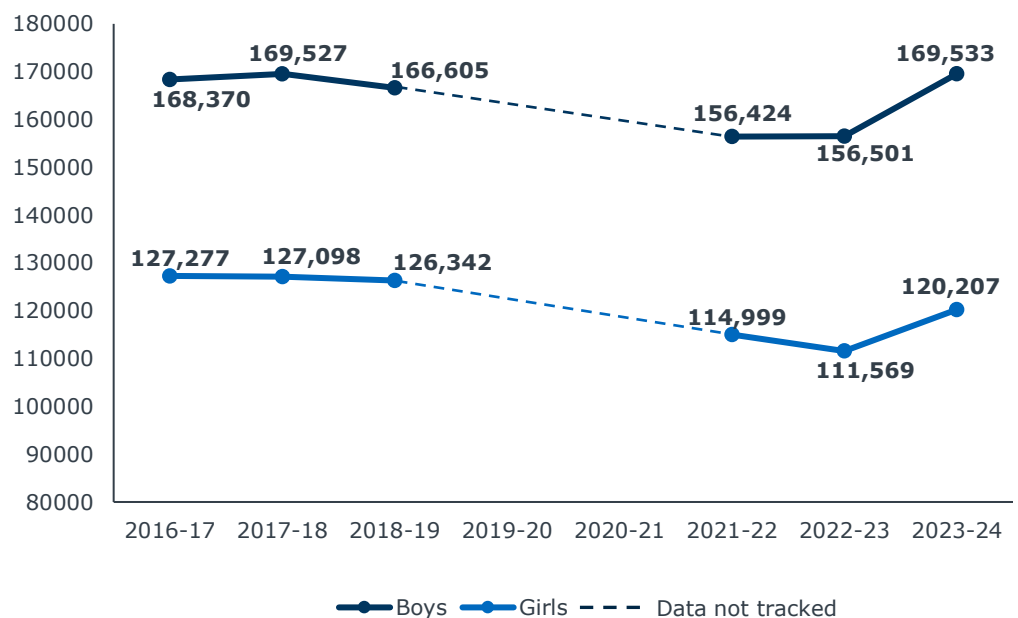
n=289,740 (total participation)



### Gap Between Boys, Girls Persists After Pandemic

Participation in high school sports is up among boys and down among girls over the last eight years, with the gap in participation expanding.

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



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

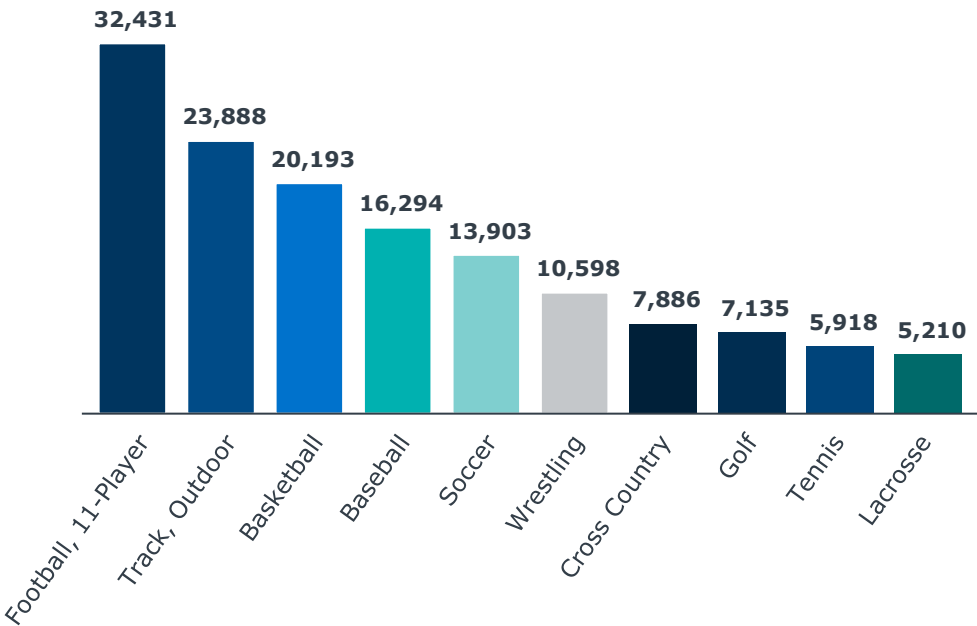
# Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

## Football Takes Top Spot

Like most states, football was the biggest boys' sport as of 2023-2024. Lacrosse was the biggest deviation from national trends as the 10<sup>th</sup> largest sport in Michigan. In contrast, it is not in the top 10 nationally.

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

n = 169,533 (boys' participation rate)

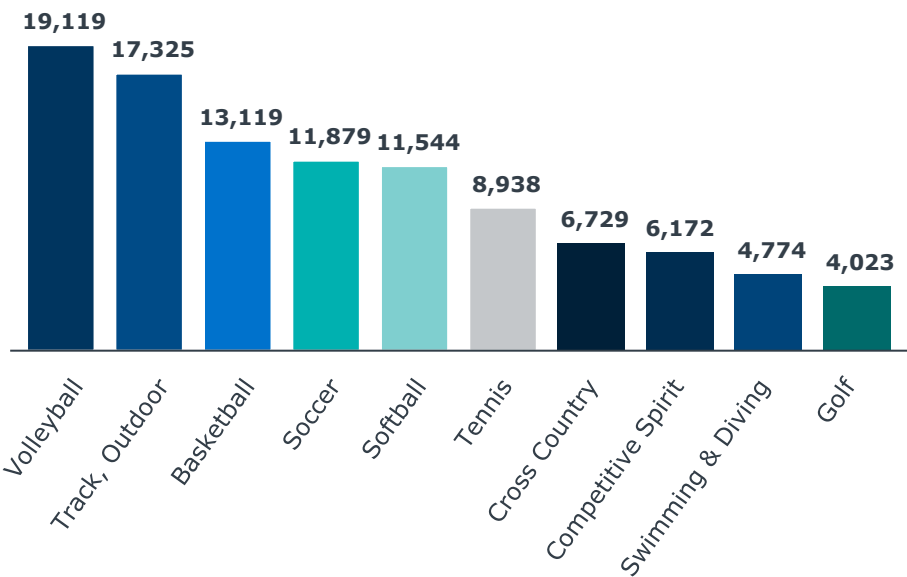


## Golf Breaks Into Top 10

The top girls' sports in Michigan largely reflect national trends. The biggest deviation is golf, which is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest sport in the state and not in the top 10 nationally.

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

n = 120,207 (girls' 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:

- Golf
- Lacrosse
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Wrestling

### Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Skiing, Alpine
- Tennis
- Swimming & Diving

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Football, 11-Player	32,431	0.5%	-11%
Track and Field, Outdoor	23,888	3%	3%
Basketball	20,193	-2%	-5%
Baseball	16,294	-2%	-9%
Soccer	13,903	5%	-4%
Wrestling	10,598	10%	13%
Cross Country	7,886	-1%	-16%
Golf	7,135	5%	16%
Tennis	5,918	-1%	-3%
Lacrosse	5,210	4%	2%
Bowling	4,292	-2%	13%
Swimming & Diving	3,990	-3%	-19%
Ice Hockey	3,117	0%	-8%
Football, 8-player	2,583	0%	129%
Weightlifting	2546	N/A	20%
Esport	1,854	N/A	N/A
Volleyball	1,160	N/A	N/A
Trap Shooting	1,034	N/A	N/A
Unified Basketball	836	N/A	N/A
Skiing, Alpine	822	-11%	-1%
Track and Field, Indoor	575	N/A	22%

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
Water Polo	478	N/A	-22%
Crew	460	N/A	-23%
Archery	378	N/A	88%
Bass Fishing	378	N/A	N/A
Snowboarding	197	N/A	-10%
Flag Football	159	N/A	14%
Unified Bowling	156	N/A	N/A
Mt. Biking	148	N/A	N/A
Unified Track and Field, Outdoor	127	N/A	N/A
Unified Soccer	94	N/A	N/A
Unified Strength Training	88	N/A	N/A
Sailing	77	N/A	N/A
Skiing, Cross Country	69	N/A	-3%
Equestrian	56	N/A	-41%
Synchronized Swimming	41	N/A	N/A
Unified Volleyball	38	N/A	N/A
Badminton	37	N/A	N/A
Ultimate Frisbee	37	N/A	N/A
Riflery	35	N/A	-69%

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
Unified Golf	3	N/A	N/A
Kayaking	2	N/A	N/A
Cycling	1	N/A	N/A
Unified Cheer	1	N/A	N/A
Unified Cross Country	1	N/A	N/A

# Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

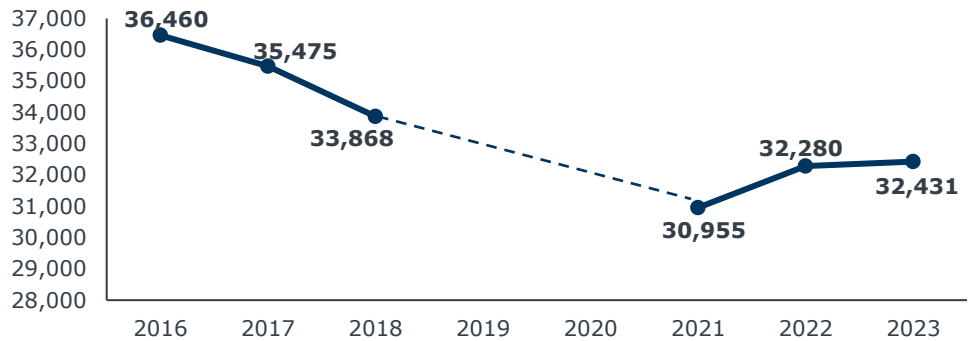
## Boys

### Biggest Sport

#### 11-Player Football Declines Began Before the Pandemic

Participation in football fell 11% between 2016 and 2023. Participation has increased slightly the last two years but is still well below 2016 levels.

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

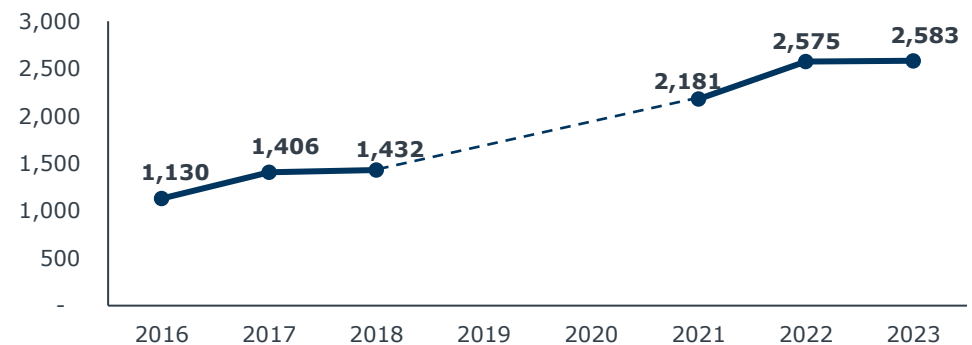


### Fastest Growth

#### In Contrast, 8-Player Football on the Rise

Meanwhile, participation in 8-player football has grown every year since 2016, for 129% of total growth.

Change in Boys' 8-Player Football Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

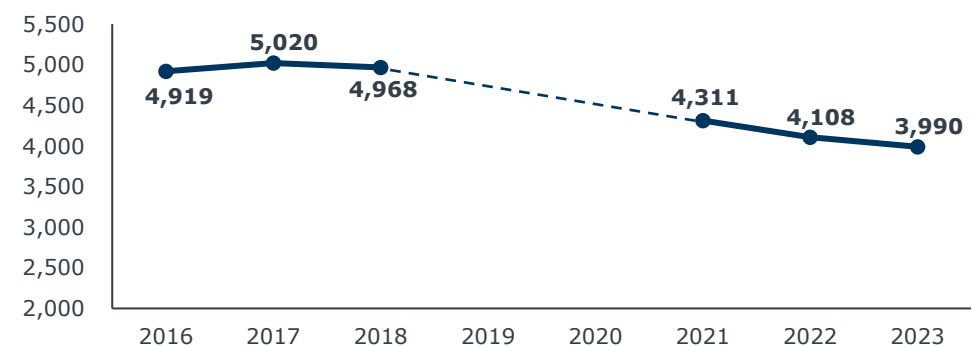


### Largest Decline<sup>1</sup>

#### Steady Decline in Swimming and Diving

Participation in swimming and diving has dropped every year but one since 2016, for a total decline of 19%.

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



1) Excludes sports with fewer than 500 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

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:

- Football, 8-Player
- Golf
- Lacrosse
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Wrestling

### Areas of Steady Decline

In comparison, participation has fallen in the last year and across the last eight years decade 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
- Cross Country
- Gymnastics
- Softball
- Swimming & Diving

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Volleyball	19,119	-1%	0%
Track and Field, Outdoor	17,325	5%	2%
Basketball	13,119	-5%	-17%
Soccer	11,879	0%	-11%
Softball, Fast Pitch	11,544	-2%	-15%
Tennis	8,938	9%	0%
Cross Country	6,729	-2%	-21%
Competitive Spirit	6,172	4%	-8%
Swimming & Diving	4,774	-4%	-16%
Golf	4,023	5%	10%
Lacrosse	3,271	1%	16%
Bowling	2,767	50%	-6%
Weightlifting	1,221	N/A	17%
Wrestling	1,216	39%	400%
Field Hockey	1,090	N/A	15%
Skiing, Alpine	786	-8%	4%
Unified Basketball	581	N/A	N/A
Equestrian	573	N/A	-33%
Gymnastics	529	-6%	-17%
Water Polo	495	N/A	-15%
Flag Football	467	N/A	167%

1) Excludes sports with fewer than

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
Track and Field, Indoor	432	N/A	1%
Crew	392	N/A	-24%
Esport	369	N/A	N/A
Ice Hockey	311	1,844%	-13%
Archery	303	N/A	49%
Figure Skating	301	N/A	N/A
Trap Shooting	273	N/A	N/A
Synchronized Swimming	160	N/A	90%
Football, 11-Player	143	12%	29%
Snowboarding	109	N/A	10%
Sailing	98	N/A	N/A
Skiing, Cross Country	78	N/A	34%
Unified Bowling	73	N/A	N/A
Mt. Biking	72	N/A	N/A
Unified Cheer	72	N/A	N/A
Unified Soccer	61	N/A	N/A
Unified Track and Field, Outdoor	54	N/A	N/A
Unified Strength Training	45	N/A	N/A
Adapted Basketball	43	N/A	N/A
Unified Volleyball	28	N/A	N/A
Bass Fishing	27	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
Riflery	18	N/A	0%
Badminton	17	N/A	N/A
Football, 8-player	17	21%	21%
Unified Flag Football	17	N/A	N/A
Baseball	15	-56%	67%
Ultimate Frisbee	10	N/A	N/A
Adapted Strength Training	8	N/A	N/A
Unified Tennis	8	N/A	N/A
Unified Bass Fishing	7	N/A	N/A
Adapted Soccer	6	N/A	N/A
Air Riflery	6	N/A	N/A
Adapted Track	4	N/A	N/A
Cycling	3	N/A	N/A
Martial Arts	3	N/A	N/A
Unified Golf	2	N/A	N/A
Adapted Swimming	1	N/A	N/A
Adapted Volleyball	1	N/A	N/A
Kayaking	1	N/A	N/A
Unified Cross Country	1	N/A	N/A

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

# Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

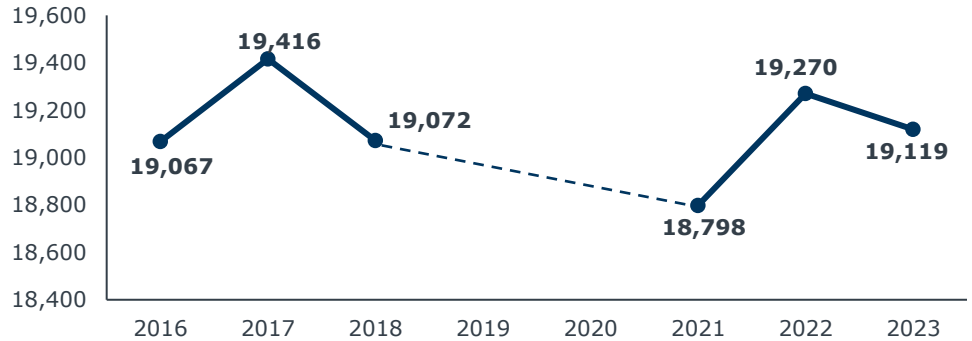
## Girls

### Biggest Sport

#### Volleyball Faces Volatility

Participation in volleyball has alternately increased and decreased most years, ultimately remaining at roughly the same level in 2023.

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

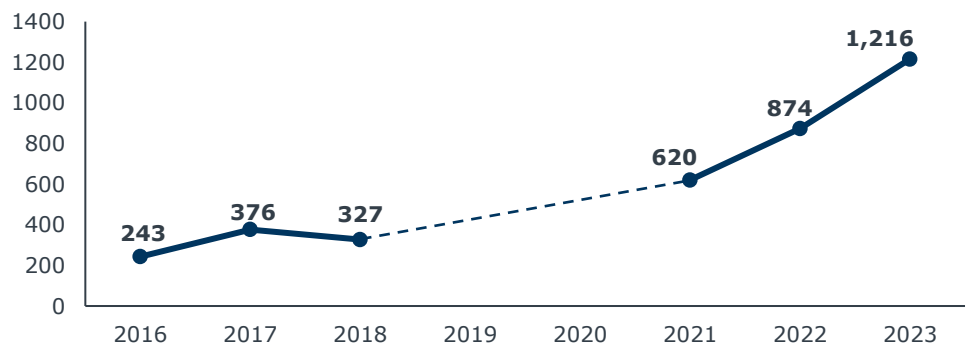


### Fastest Growth

#### Wrestling Small but Growing Fast Among Girls

Participation in wrestling increased 400% between 2016 and 2023 but remains outside of the top 10 sports.

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

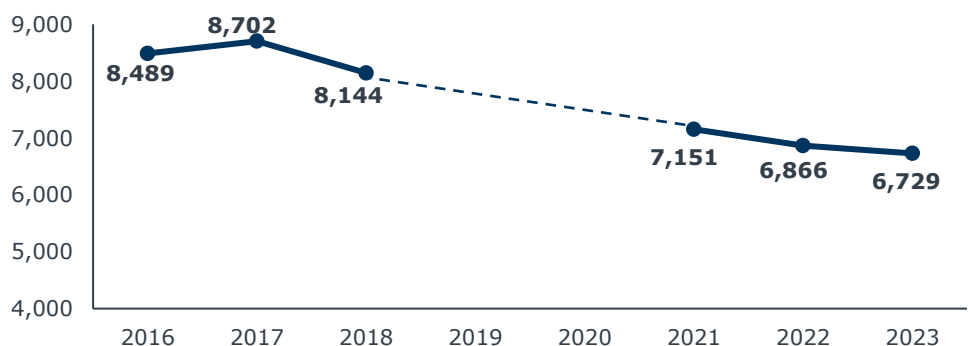


### Largest Decline<sup>1</sup>

#### Cross Country Participation Sliding Since Pandemic

Participation in cross country has declined every year but one since 2016, for a total decline of 21%.

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



1) Excludes crew and equestrian because of missing data

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.