

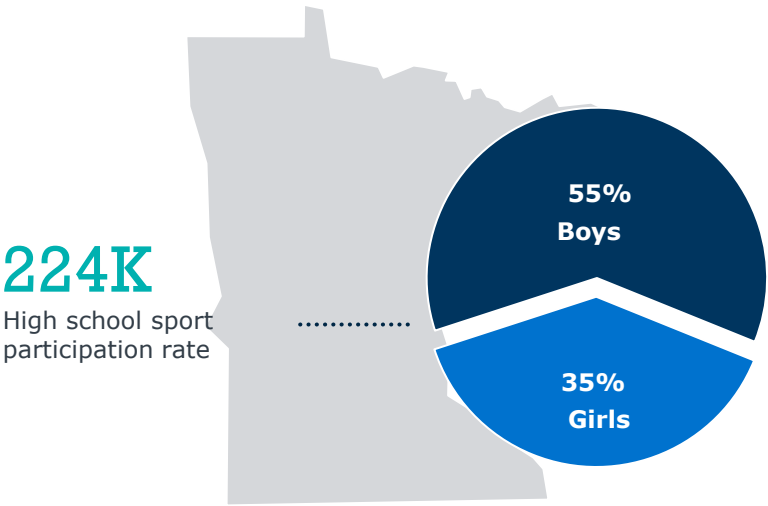
High School Sports Participation State Profile

State Profile: Minnesota

Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2023-2024, the high school sports participation rate was 224,179. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

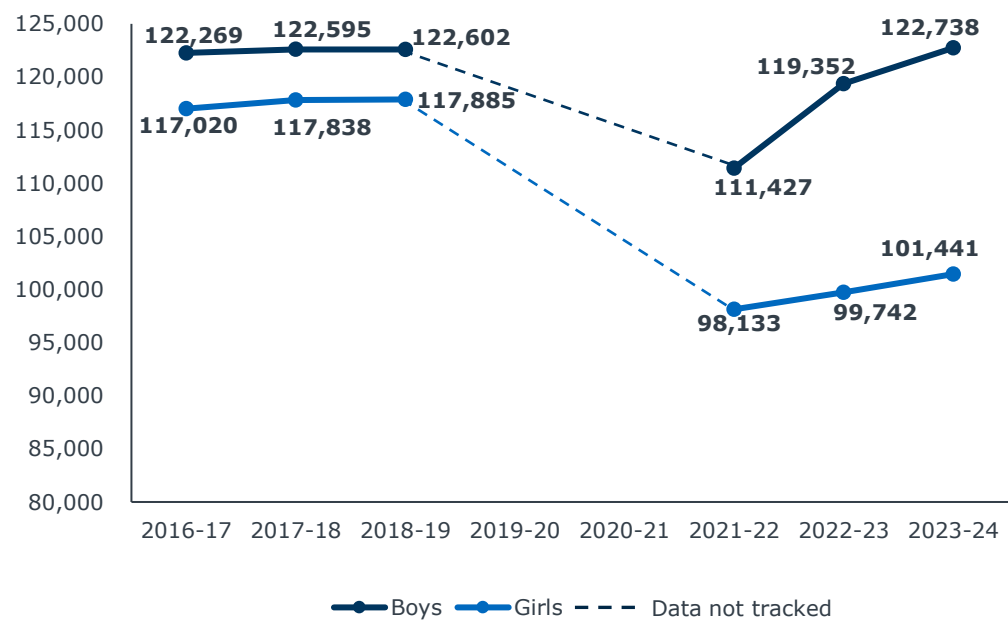
High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24
n=224,179 (total participation)



Gap Between Boys, Girls Expands After Pandemic

Minnesota had one of the smallest gaps between boys and girls before the pandemic. While participation dropped among both, the decline was great among girls. Meanwhile, boys' participation has recovered more quickly since 2021 and is now slightly higher than it was in 2016.

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



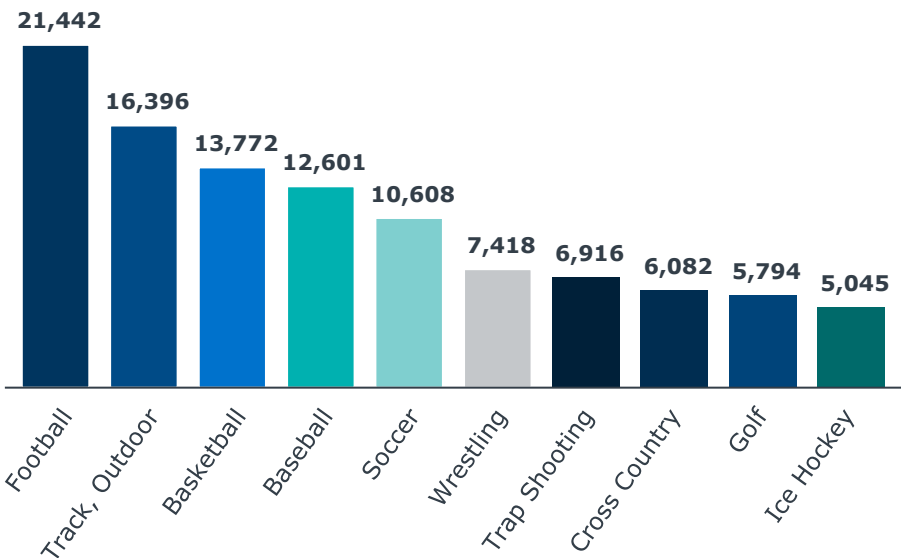
Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

Trap Shooting, Ice Hockey Make Top 10

Like most states, football was the biggest boys' sport as of 2023-2024. The biggest deviations from national trends include trap shooting and ice hockey, which are the 7th and 10th largest sports in Minnesota respectively. These sports are not in the top 10 nationally.

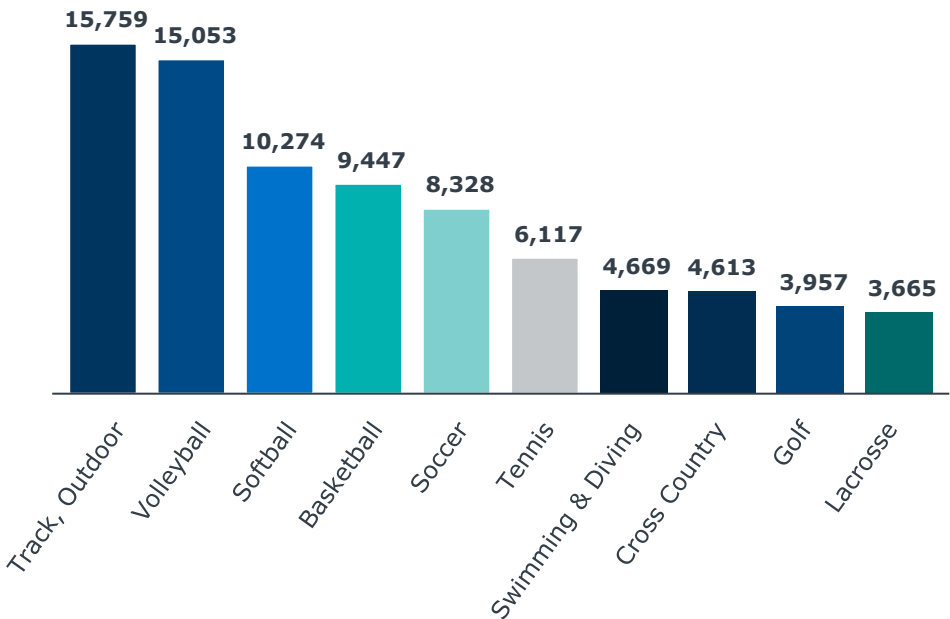
Top 10 Boys' Sports by Participation Rate, 2022-2023
n = 122,738 (boys' participation rate)



Golf Breaks Into Top 10

The top girls' sports in Minnesota more similarly reflect national trends. The biggest deviation is golf, which is the 9th largest sport in in the state and not in the top 10 nationally.

Top 10 Girls' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024
n = 101,441 (girls' participation rate)



Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

Boys

Areas of Consistent Growth

Seven 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:

- Adapted Bowling
- Adapted Floor Hockey
- Adapted Soccer
- Adapted Softball
- Golf
- Lacrosse
- Soccer

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.

- Skiing, Cross Country

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Football, 11-Player	21,442	0%	-7%
Track and Field, Outdoor	16,396	1%	-4%
Basketball	13,772	2%	0%
Baseball	12,601	4%	-9%
Soccer	10,608	7%	13%
Wrestling	7,418	9%	-10%
Trap Shooting	6,916	-3%	N/A
Cross Country	6,082	0%	-18%
Golf	5,794	9%	5%
Ice Hockey	5,045	2%	-12%
Tennis	4,142	-3%	-18%
Lacrosse	3,750	3%	4%
Swimming & Diving	2,848	1%	-25%
Football, 9-player	1,752	76%	-5%
Skiing, Cross Country	1,703	-5%	-16%
Skiing, Alpine	1,116	-3%	6%
Adapted Bowling	399	13%	46%
Adapted Floor Hockey	335	12%	36%
Adapted Softball	294	17%	21%
Adapted Soccer	285	8%	45%
Dance	20	-75%	N.A

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

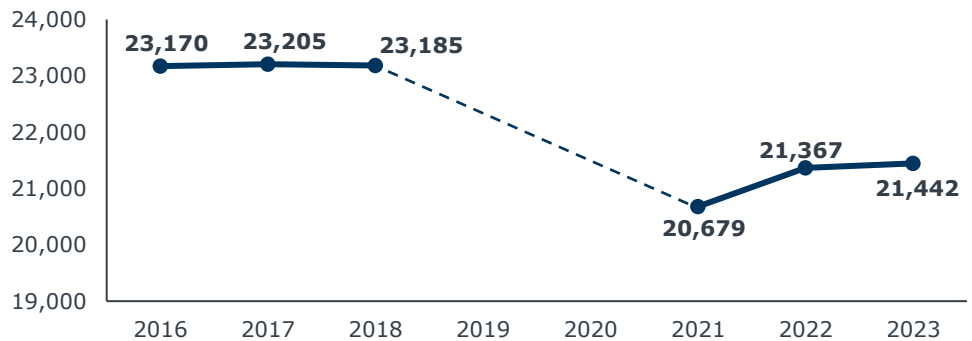
Boys

Biggest Sport

Football Still Recovering from Pandemic-Era Decline

Participation in football decreased 7% between 2016 and 2023. However, it is showing recent signs of growth. Participation increased 4% from 2021 to 2023.

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

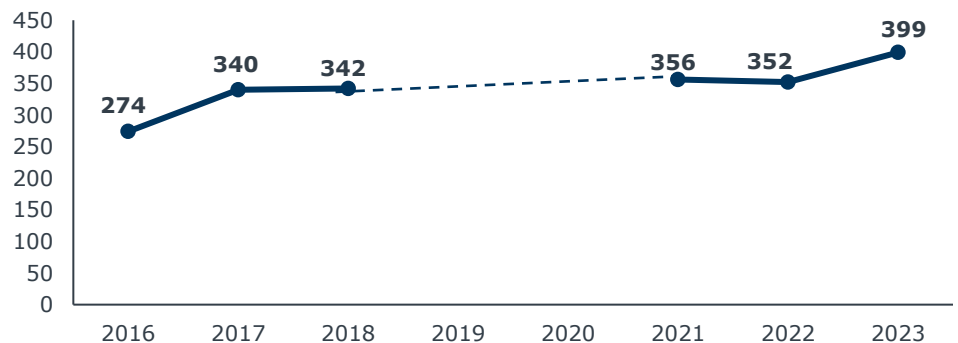


Fastest Growth

Small But Steady Growth for Adapted Bowling

Participation in adapted bowling increased 46% between 2016 and 2023.

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

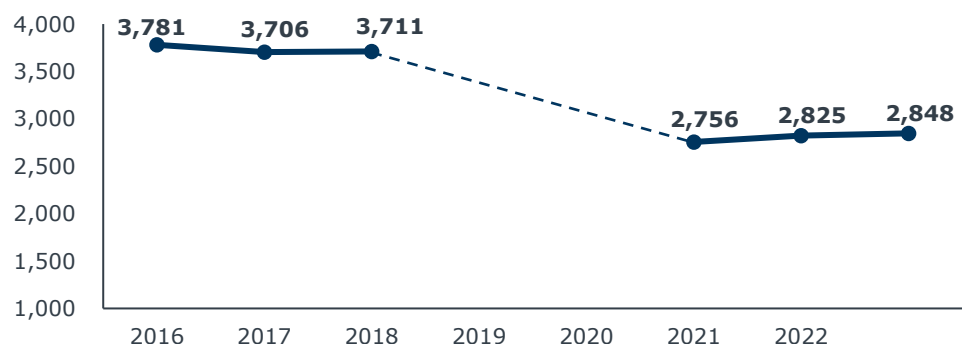


Largest Decline

Swimming Levels Off After Pandemic-Era Decline

Participation in swimming and diving decreased 25% between 2016 and 2023, dropping from the top 10. However, participation has leveled off, with slight growth since 2021.

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:

- Badminton
- Wrestling

Areas of Steady Decline

In comparison, participation fell in the last year and across the last eight years 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.

- Adapted Floor Hockey
- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Dance Team, High Kick
- Gymnastics
- Skiing, Cross Country
- Swimming & Diving
- Synchronized Swimming
- Tennis

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Track and Field, Outdoor	15,759	5%	-2%
Volleyball	15,053	2%	-8%
Softball, Fast Pitch	10,274	6%	-22%
Basketball	9,447	-1%	-22%
Soccer	8,328	4%	0%
Tennis	6,117	-1%	-7%
Swimming & Diving	4,669	-4%	-19%
Cross Country	4,613	-1%	-49%
Golf	3,957	6%	-7%
Lacrosse	3,665	4%	-5%
Dance Team, Jazz	3,548	7%	-29%
Dance Team, High Kick	3,338	-5%	-33%
Ice Hockey	3,320	0%	-11%
Gymnastics	1,922	-6%	-27%
Trap Shooting	1,686	-11%	N/A
Skiing, Cross Country	1,656	-11%	-33%
Badminton	1,062	5%	76%
Wrestling	1,004	87%	5,184%
Skiing, Alpine	937	-7%	11%
Synchronized Swimming	267	-10%	-37%
Adapted Bowling	242	0%	0%
Adapted Floor Hockey	153	-11%	-11%
Adapted Soccer	142	2%	9%
Adapted Softball	137	0%	-27%
Football, 11-Player	96	-43%	N/A
Baseball	41	-41%	925%
Football, 9-player	8	300%	N/A

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

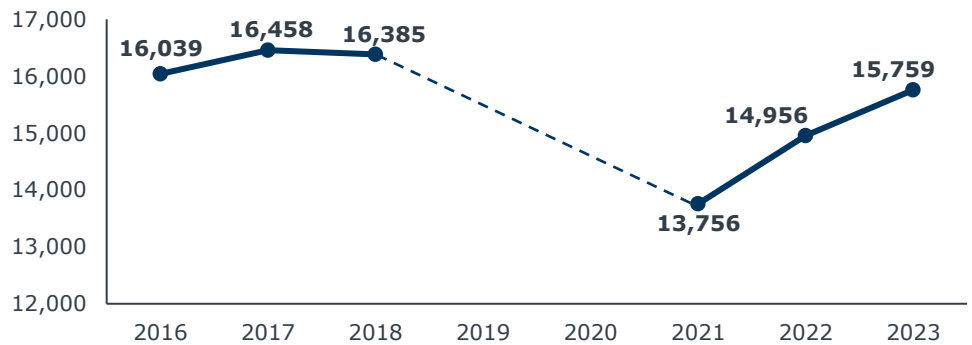
Girls

Biggest Sport

Track Recovering From Pandemic Decline

Participation outdoor track and field fell 2% between 2016 and 2023. However, it has been showing signs of growth, with a 15% increase between 2021 and 2023.

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

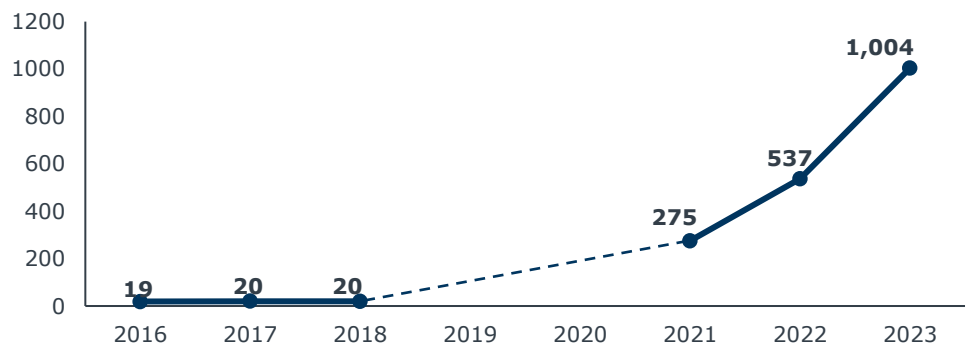


Fastest Growth

Wrestling Small but Growing Fast Among Girls

Participation in wrestling increased 5,184% between 2016 and 2023 but remains outside of the top 10.

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

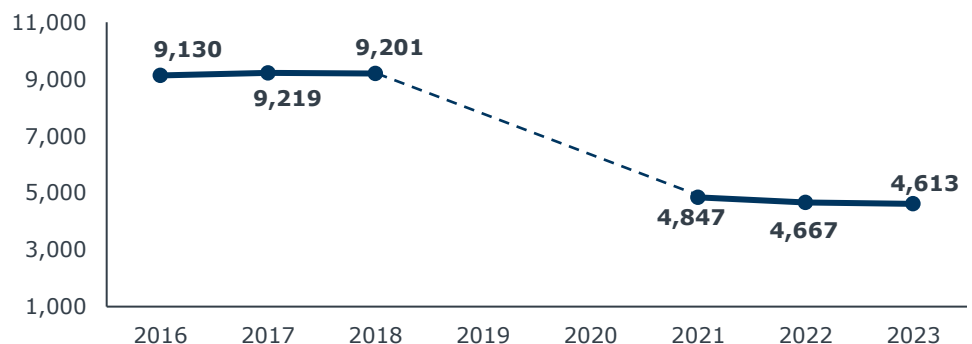


Largest Decline

Cross Country Stabilizes After Pandemic Decline

Participation in cross country fell 49% between 2016 and 2023, remaining in the top 10.

Change in Girls' Cross Country 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.