

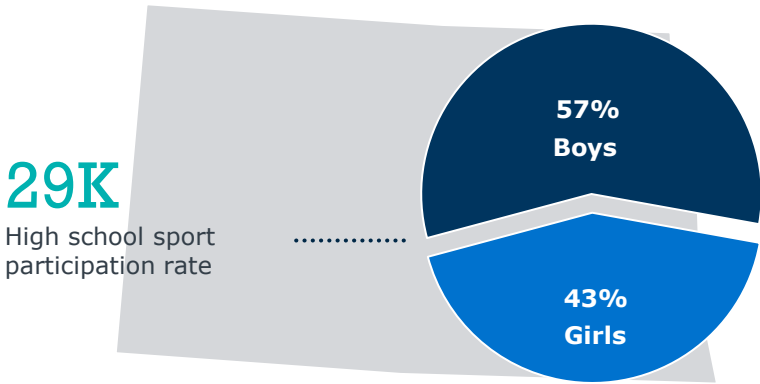
High School Sports Participation State Profile

State Profile: North Dakota

Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2023-2024, the high school sports participation rate was 29,091 in North Dakota. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

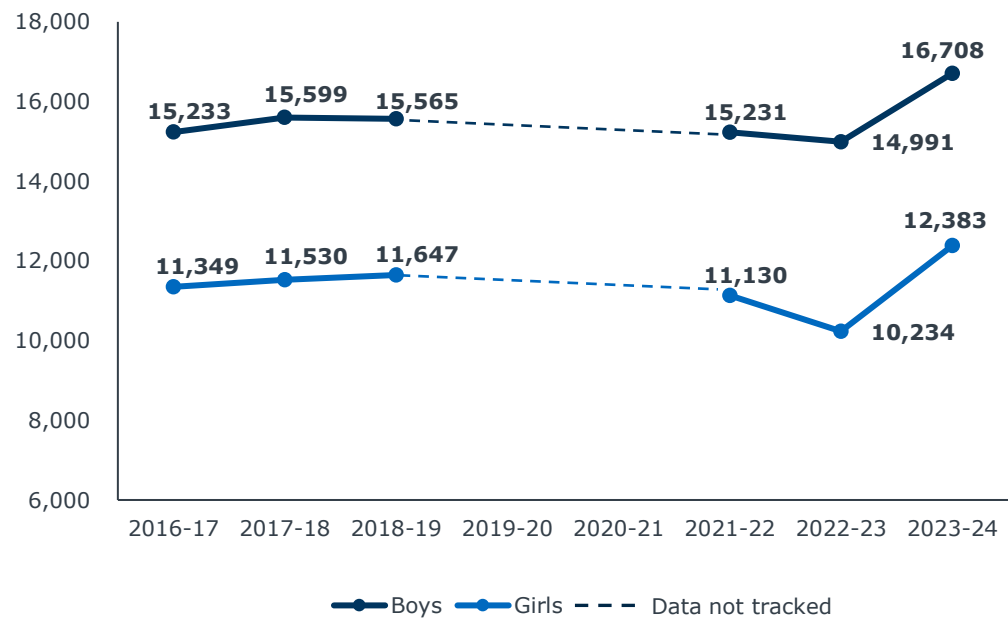
High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24
n=29,091 (total participation)



Gap Between Boys, Girls Persists After Pandemic

Participation in high school sports is growing among boys and girls over the last eight years. The gap in participation expanded slightly after the pandemic but has returned to previous levels.

Change in Girls and Boys Participation Rates, 2016-17 to 2023-24



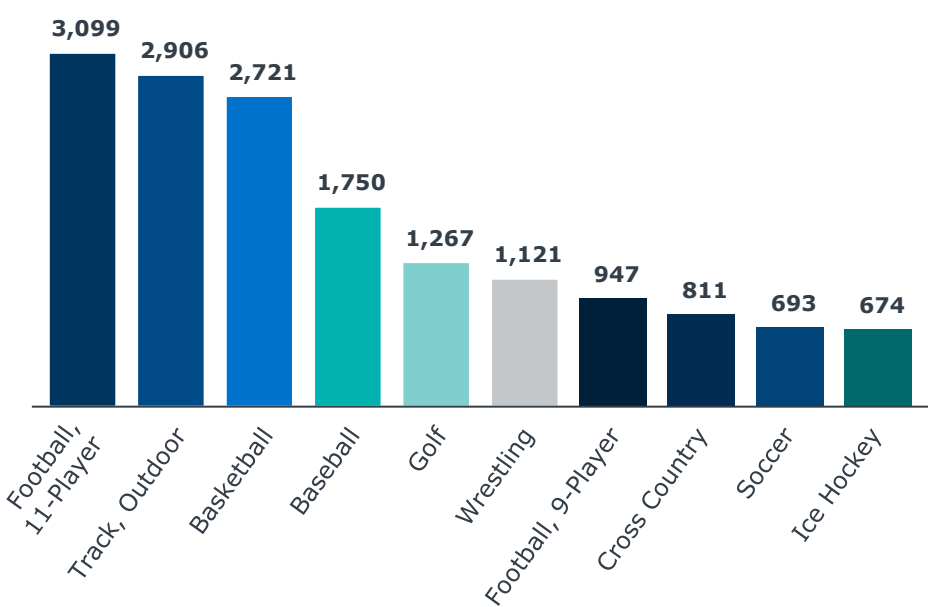
Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

Football Takes Two Spots in Top 10

Like most states, football was the biggest boys' sport as of 2023-2024. The biggest deviation from national trends was wrestling and ice hockey, the 6th and 10th largest sports in North Dakota, respectively.

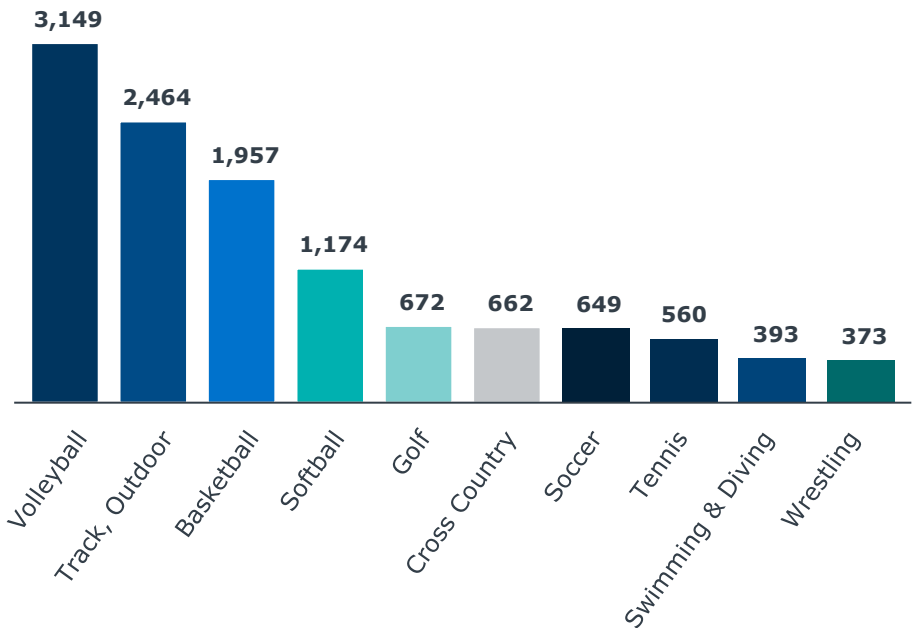
Top 10 Boys' Sports by Participation Rate, 2022-2023
n = 16,708 (boys' participation rate)



Top Girls' Sports Mostly Mirror National Trends

The top girls' sports in North Dakota closely align with the top sports nationally. The biggest deviation is wrestling, which is the 10th largest sport in the state and not ranked nationally.

Top 10 Girls' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024
n = 12,383 (girls' participation rate)



Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

Boys

Areas of Consistent Growth

Ten 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:

- Baseball
- Cross Country
- Football, 11-Player
- Golf
- Ice Hockey
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Soccer
- Swimming & Diving
- Tennis
- Wrestling

Areas of Steady Decline

In contrast, participation did not fall in the last year and across the last eight years among any sports.

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Football, 11 Player	3,099	10%	9%
Track & Field, Outdoor	2,906	12%	18%
Basketball	2,721	2%	-6%
Baseball	1,750	6%	15%
Golf	1,267	26%	40%
Wrestling	1,121	28%	23%
Football, 9 Player	947	4%	-20%
Cross Country	811	27%	18%
Soccer	693	18%	7%
Ice Hockey	674	15%	29%
Tennis	403	15%	26%
Swimming & Diving	316	11%	4%

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

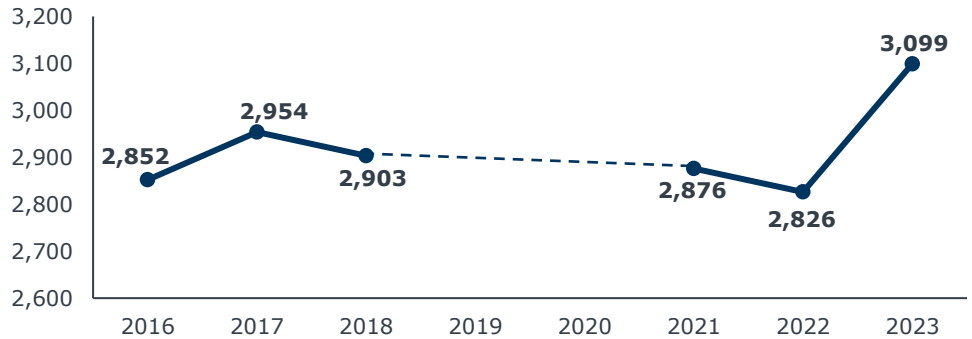
Boys

Biggest Sport

11-Player Football Growing

Participation in football increased 15% between 2016 and 2023, with most growth occurring after 2022.

Change in Boys' 11-Player Football Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

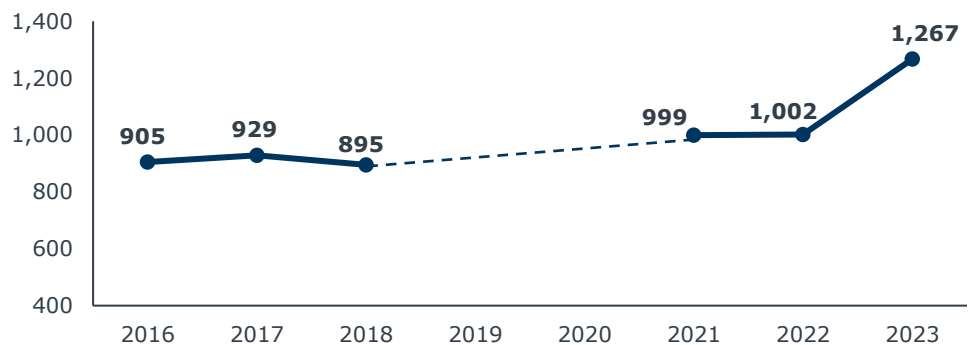


Fastest Growth

Steady Growth in Golf

Participation in boys' golf has increased every year but one, for a total growth of 40% between 2016 and 2023.

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

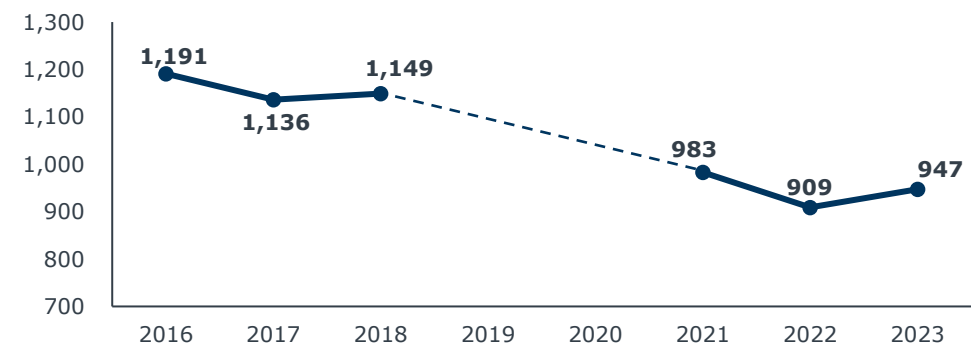


Largest Decline

9-Player Football Falls as 11-Player Grows

In contrast to 11-player football, participation in 9-player football is down 20% since 2016.

Change in Boys' 9-Player Football 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

Nine 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:

- Cross Country
- Golf
- Ice Hockey
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Soccer
- Softball
- Swimming & Diving
- Tennis
- Wrestling

Areas of Steady Decline

In comparison, participation did not fall in the last year and across the last eight years among any sports.

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Volleyball	3,149	22%	-3%
Track & Field, Outdoor	2,464	16%	24%
Basketball	1,957	11%	-13%
Softball	1,174	27%	22%
Golf	672	35%	35%
Cross Country	662	20%	9%
Soccer	649	36%	5%
Tennis	560	42%	26%
Swimming & Diving	393	14%	7%
Wrestling	373	48%	1,454%
Ice Hockey	235	5%	12%
Gymnastics	82	4%	-18%
Baseball	4	300%	-33%
Football, 9 Player	2	-75%	0%

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

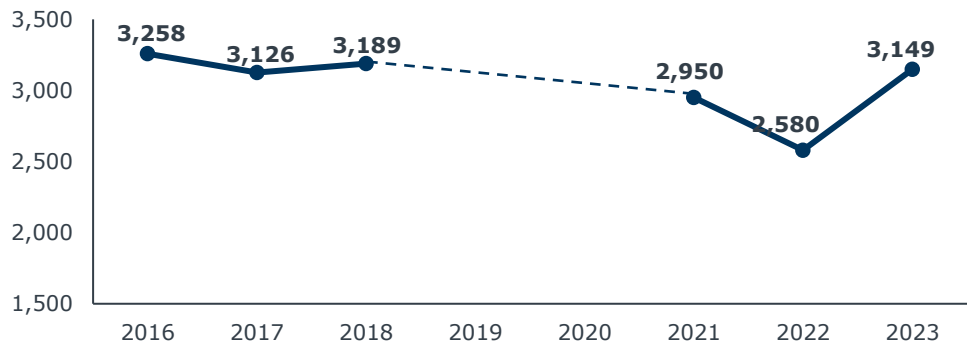
Girls

Biggest Sport

Volleyball Recovering From Pandemic Decline

Participation in volleyball fell 3% between 2016 and 2023. However, it showed signs of growth between 2022 and 2023, with a 48% increase.

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

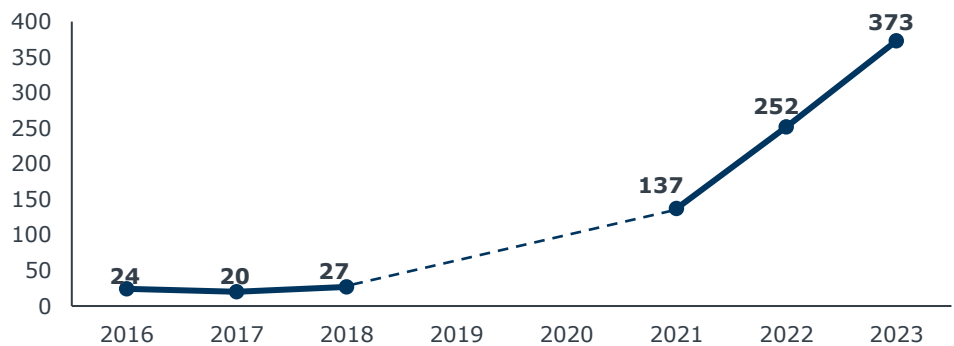


Fastest Growth

Wrestling Small but Growing Fast Among Girls

Participation in wrestling increased 1,454% between 2016 and 2023, bringing the sport into the top 10 in 2023.

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

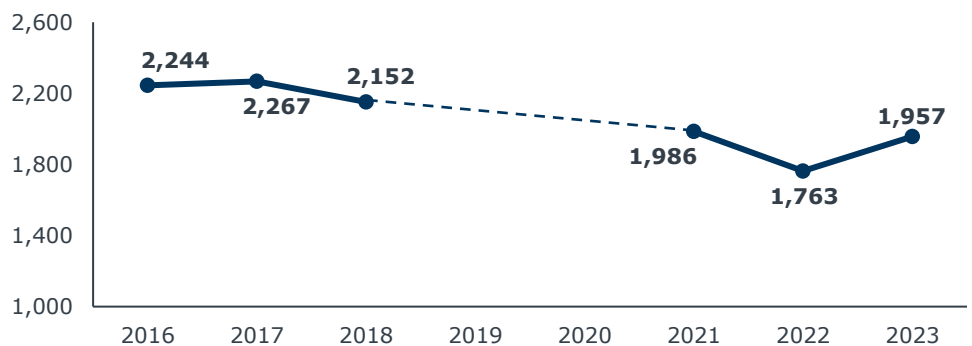


Largest Decline¹

Basketball Sees Slight Uptick After Steady Fall

Participation in basketball fell 13% between 2016 and 2023. However, it saw a 22% bump from 2022 to 2023.

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



1) Excludes sports with fewer than 100 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.