

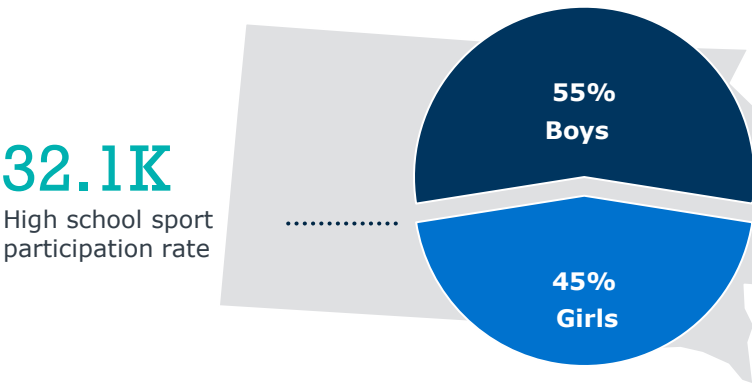
High School Sports Participation State Profile

State Profile: South Dakota

Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2023-2024, the high school sports participation rate was 32,107 in South Dakota. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

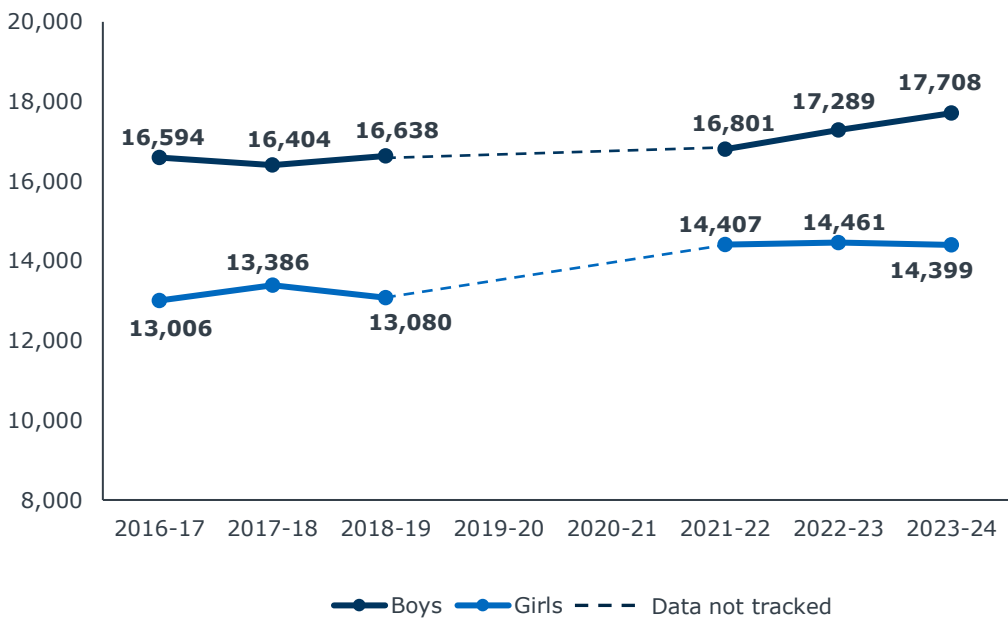
High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24
n = 32,107



Gap in Participation Grows Again After Closing Slightly

Participation in high school sports is growing among boys and girls over the last eight years. However, participation among girls has started to fall recently, contributing to a larger gap in participation.

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



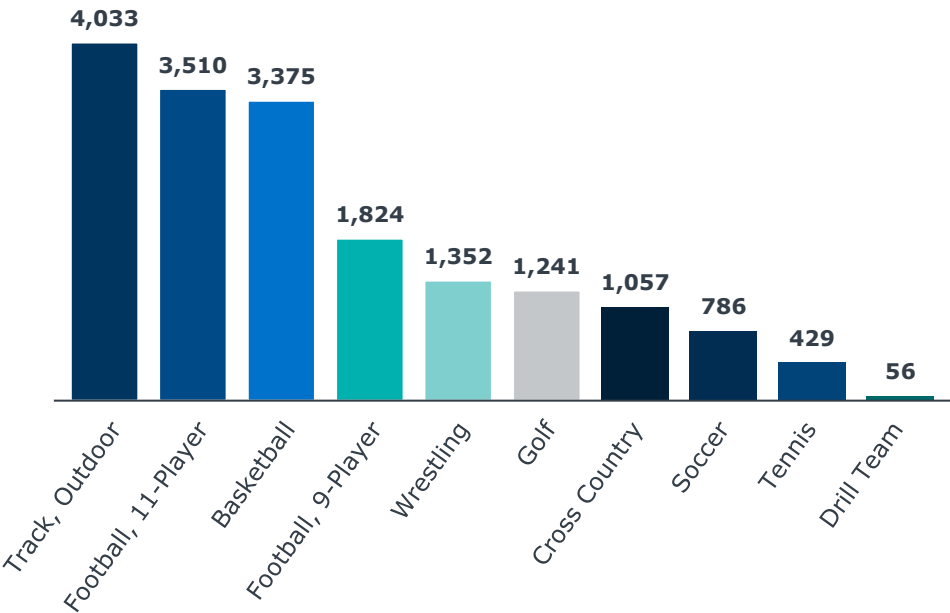
Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

Track Surpasses Football

Unlike most states, outdoor track was the biggest boys' sport as of 2023-2024. Nationally, 11-player football is the largest boys' sport. That said, football still took two spots in the top 10 in South Dakota.

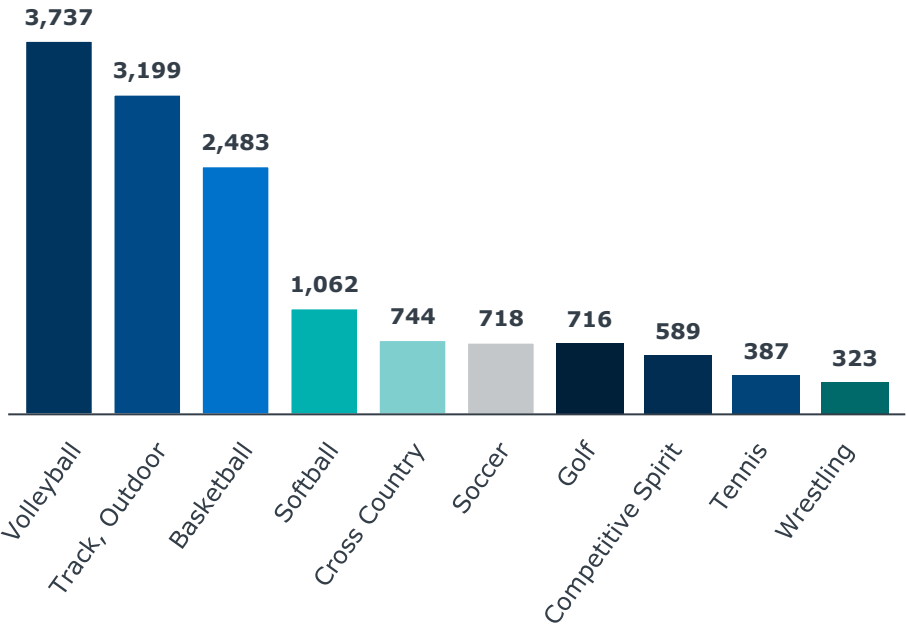
Top 10 Boys' Sports by Participation Rate, 2022-2023
n = 17,708



Wrestling Emerges As Top Sport Among Girls

The Top girls' sports also largely reflect national trends. The biggest deviations were golf and wrestling, the seventh and 10th largest sports in the state, respectively. In contrast, these two sports are not in the top 10 nationally.

Top 10 Girls' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024
n = 14,399



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:

- Cross Country
- Golf
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Wrestling

Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Basketball

Because the participation rate double counts multi-sport athletes, it is possible this decline may be attributed to growing specialization.

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Track & Field, Outdoor	4,033	4%	19%
Football, 11-Player	3,510	0%	6%
Basketball	3,375	-2%	-3%
Football, 9-Player	1,824	0%	-9%
Wrestling	1,352	6%	11%
Golf	1,241	12%	21%
Cross Country	1,057	7%	2%
Soccer	786	-1%	10%
Tennis	429	-7%	5%
Drill Team	56	600%	N/A
Competitive Spirit	20	67%	N/A
Volleyball	20	N/A	N/A
Gymnastics	5	N/A	N/A

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

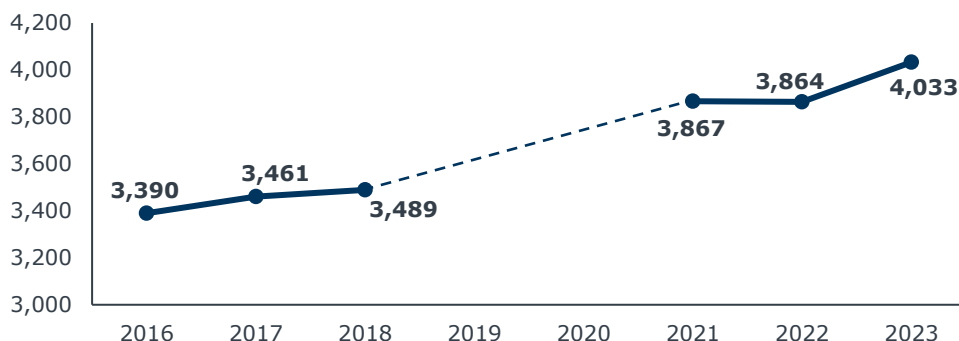
Boys

Biggest Sport

Steady Growth in Track

Participation in outdoor track and field increased every year but one between 2016 and 2023, for total growth of 19%.

Change in Boys' Outdoor Track & Field Participation, 2016-17 to 2023-24

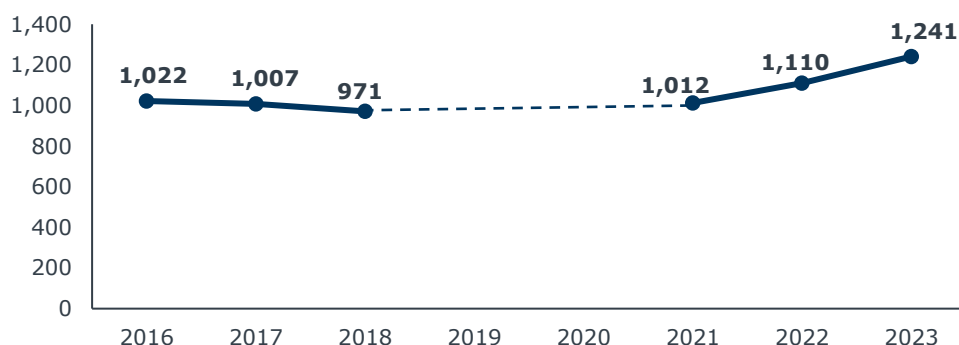


Fastest Growth¹

After Early Decline, Golf Participation is Rising

Participation in golf is up 21% since 2016, despite slight declines before the pandemic.

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

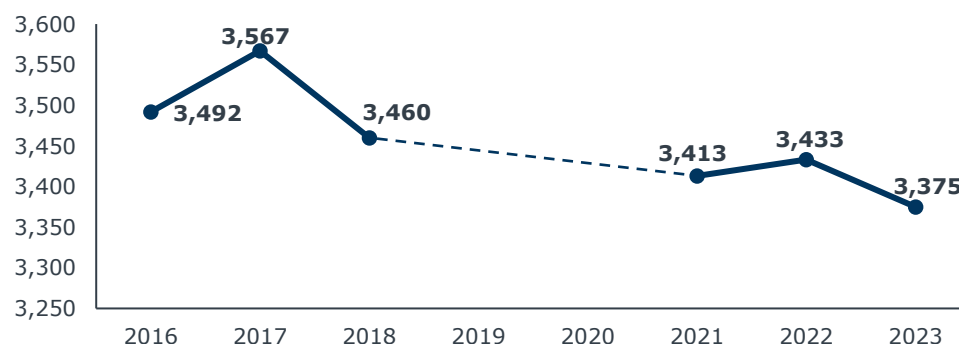


Largest Decline

Basketball Participation Down Among Boys

Participation in basketball fell 3% between 2016 and 2023, despite two years of increases.

Change in Boys' 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.

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, 9-Player
- Golf
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Volleyball
- Wrestling

Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Competitive Spirit
- Gymnastics

Because the participation rate double counts multi-sport athletes, it is possible some of these declines may be attributed to growing specialization.

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Volleyball	3,737	5%	9%
Track & Field, Outdoor	3,199	4%	13%
Basketball	2,483	0%	-10%
Softball	1,062	36%	N/A
Cross Country	744	7%	-6%
Soccer	718	-6%	12%
Golf	716	4%	21%
Competitive Spirit	589	-14%	-17%
Tennis	387	-1%	68%
Wrestling	323	5%	728%
Gymnastics	223	-10%	-20%
Drill Team	154	108%	N/A
Football, 9-Player	53	342%	5,200%
Football, 11-Player	11	-21%	175%

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

Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

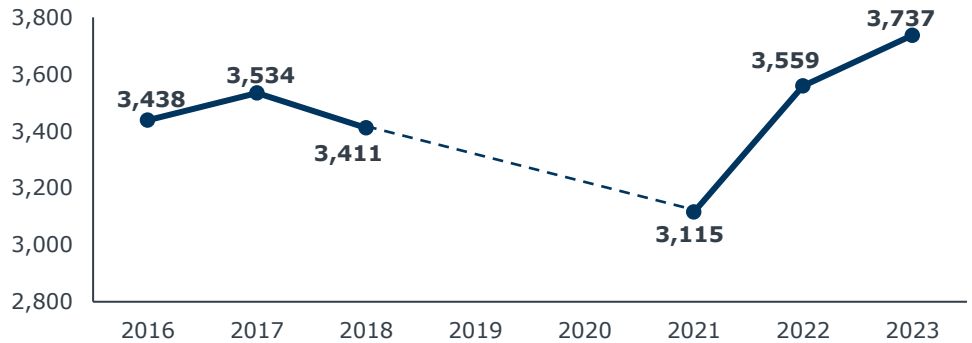
Girls

Biggest Sport

Volleyball Fully Recovers from Pandemic Decline

As of 2023, participation in volleyball was up 9% from 2016, despite a 12% decline between 2017 and 2021.

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

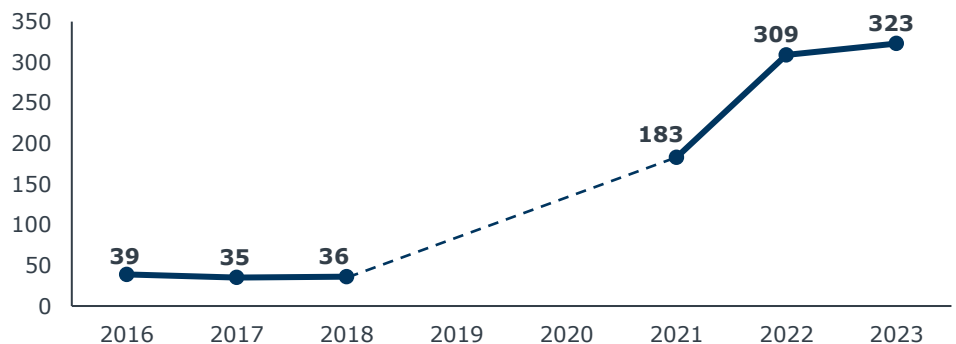


Fastest Growth¹

Wrestling Small but Growing Fast Among Girls

Participation in wrestling increased dramatically after near-constant levels prior to the pandemic. Between 2018 and 2023, participation increased nearly 800%.

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

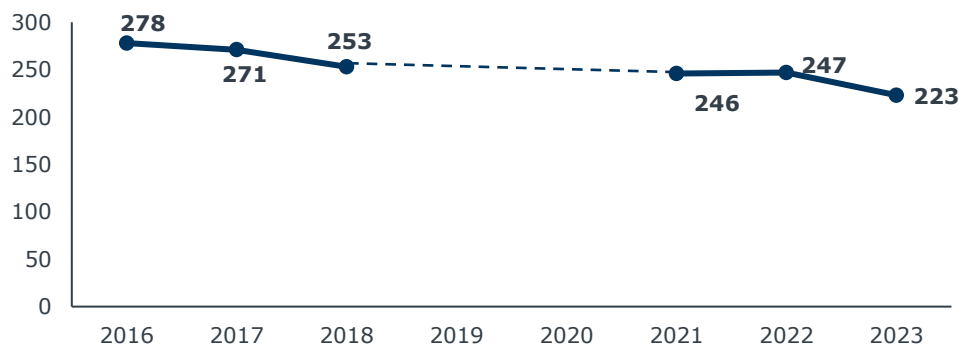


Largest Decline

Slow, Steady Decline for Girls' Gymnastics

Participation in gymnastics decreased almost every year between 2016 and 2023, for a total decline of 20%.

Change in Girls' Gymnastics 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.