

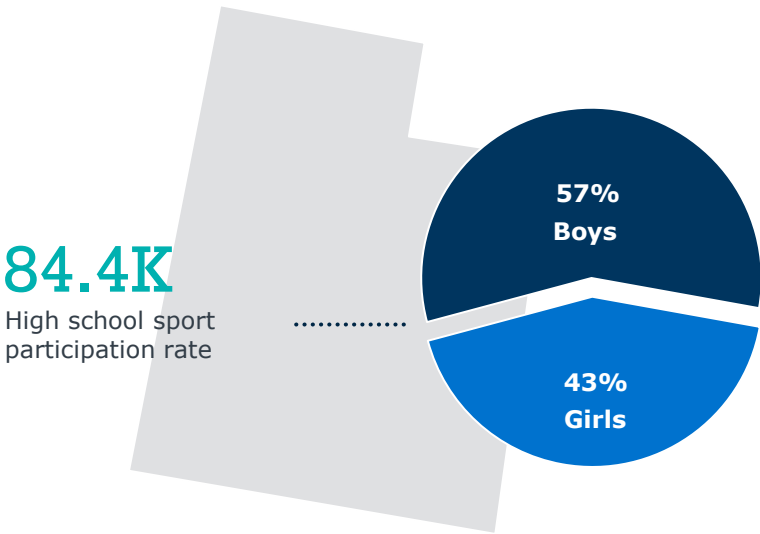
# High School Sports Participation State Profile

## State Profile: Utah

### Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2023-2024, the high school sports participation rate was 84,417 in Utah. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

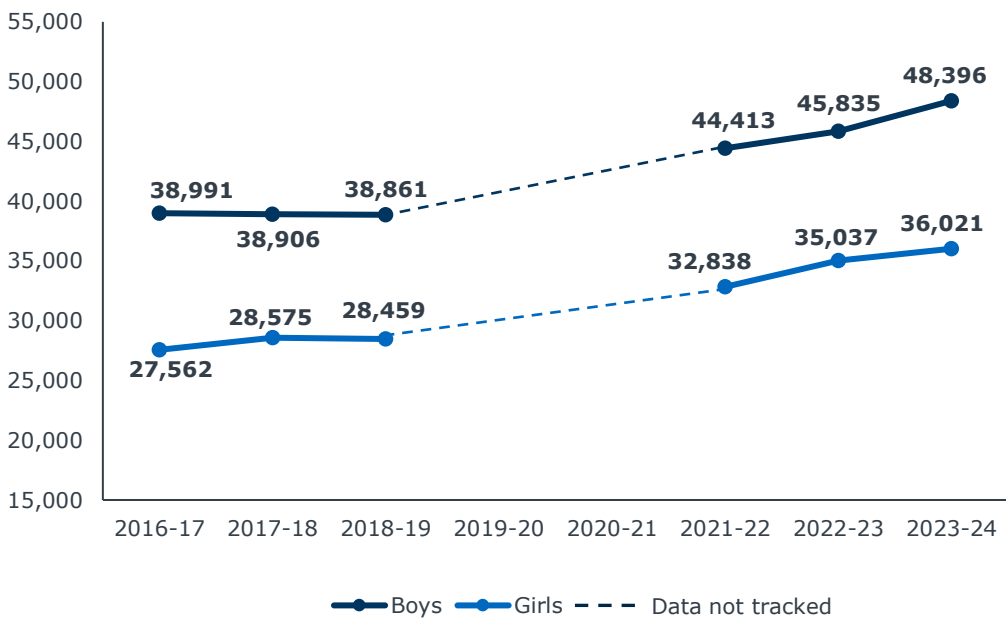
High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24  
n 84,417



### Gap Between Boys, Girls Persists After Pandemic

Participation in high school sports is growing among boys and girls over the last eight years. Unlike many states, participation did not fall after the pandemic.

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



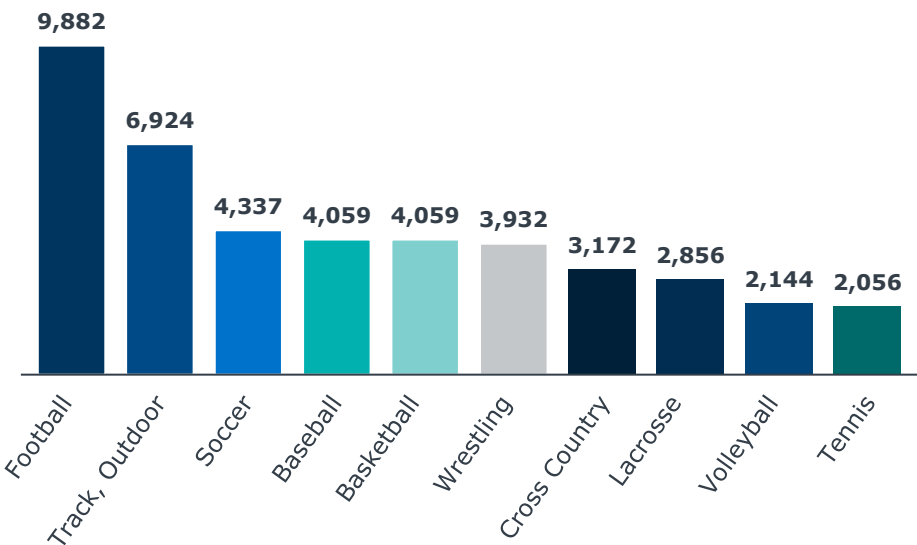
Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

# Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

## Volleyball Emerges As a Top Sport Among Boys

Like most states, football was the biggest boys' sport as of 2023-2024. The biggest deviations from national trends were lacrosse and volleyball, which are the eighth and ninth largest sports in Utah, respectively, and not in the top 10 nationally.

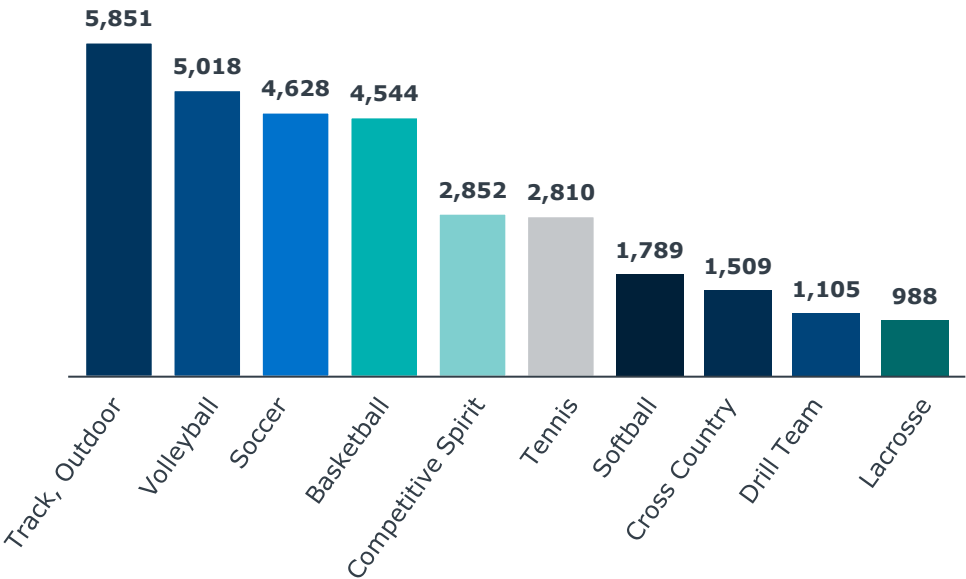
Top 10 Boys' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024  
n = 48,396



## Drill Team Emerges in Top 10 Among Girls

The top girls' sports in Utah largely reflect national trends. The biggest deviation was drill team, the ninth largest sport in the state. Drill team is not among the top 10 sports for girls in the nation.

Top 10 Girls' Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024  
n = 36,021



# 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:

- Baseball
- 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.

- Swimming & Diving

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

Sport	2023-2024 Participation	Change, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Change, 2016-17 to 2023-24
Football, 11-Player	9,882	-1%	8%
Track & Field, Outdoor	6,924	1%	14%
Soccer	4,337	-2%	10%
Baseball	4,059	9%	11%
Basketball	4,059	0%	4%
Wrestling	3,932	7%	18%
Cross Country	3,172	-3%	2%
Lacrosse	2,856	7%	N/A
Volleyball	2,144	N/A	N/A
Tennis	2,056	-5%	2%
Swimming & Diving	1,997	-4%	-2%
Golf	1,911	1%	25%
Unified Soccer	401	112%	N/A
Unified Track	361	90%	N/A
Football, 8-Player	191	108%	N/A
Competitive Spirit	114	14%	N/A
Adapted Basketball	68	-30%	N/A

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

# Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

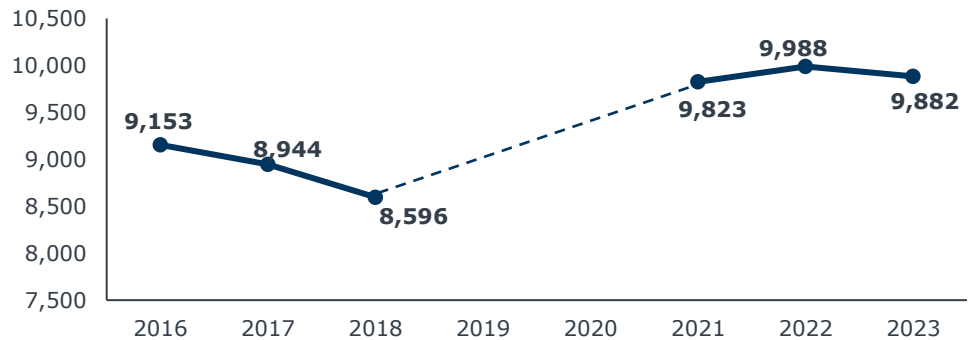
## Boys

### Biggest Sport

#### Football Participation Bounces Back But Slowing

Participation in football increased 8% between 2016 and 2023, despite several years of decline before the pandemic. However, it is showing recent signs of stagnation. Participation fell 1% from 2022 to 2023.

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

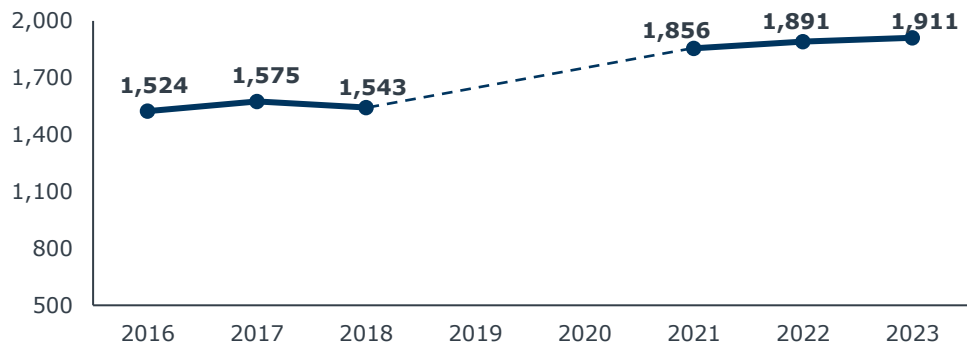


### Fastest Growth

#### Steady Growth in Golf

Participation in golf increased every year but one from 2016 to 2023, for total growth of 25%.

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

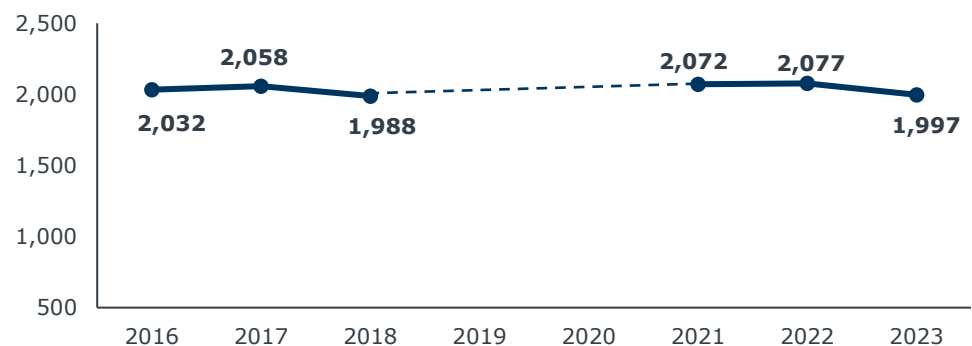


### Largest Decline

#### Swimming Participation Down Slightly

Participation in swimming and diving has held relatively steady, with just a 2% decline between 2016 and 2023.

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 Girls' 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:

- Golf
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Soccer
- Wrestling
- Volleyball

### Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Basketball
- Softball
- Swimming & Diving

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
Track & Field, Outdoor	5,625	6%	12%
Volleyball	3,966	3%	14%
Soccer	3,934	4%	8%
Basketball	2,985	-4%	-5%
Competitive Spirit	2,849	9%	N/A
Tennis	2,493	-2%	19%
Softball	2,313	-3%	-1%
Cross Country	2,257	-3%	0%
Drill Team	2,163	-1%	3%
Lacrosse	1,956	8%	N/A
Swimming & Diving	1,944	-1%	-7%
Golf	1,471	3%	29%
Wrestling	1,425	20%	2491%
Unified Soccer	292	124%	N/A
Unified Track	285	124%	N/A
Football, 11-Player	63	0%	271%

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

# Biggest, Fastest Growth, Largest Decline

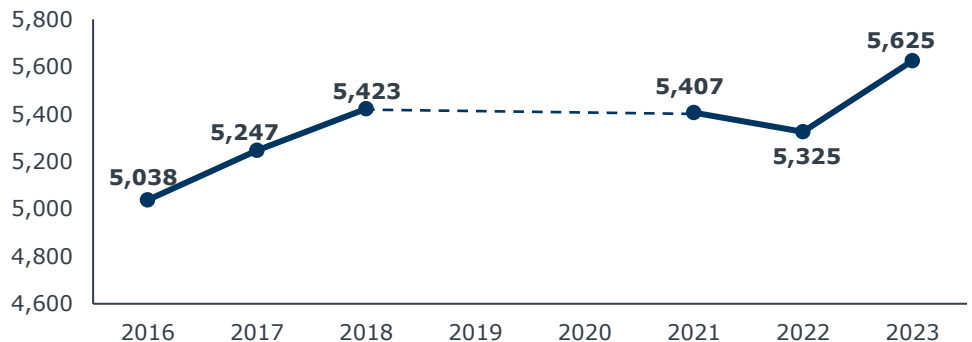
## Girls

### Biggest Sport

#### Track Resumes Growth After Pandemic Stall

Participation in track and field is up 12% since 2016, despite declining slightly in 2022.

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

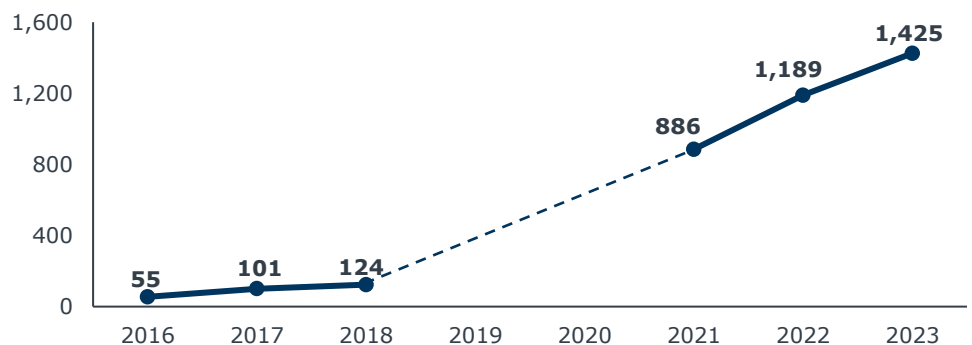


### Fastest Growth

#### Quick Growth in Wrestling

Participation in wrestling increased 2,491% between 2016 and 2023. Wrestling, currently the 13<sup>th</sup> largest sport, could break into the top 10 if this trend continues.

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

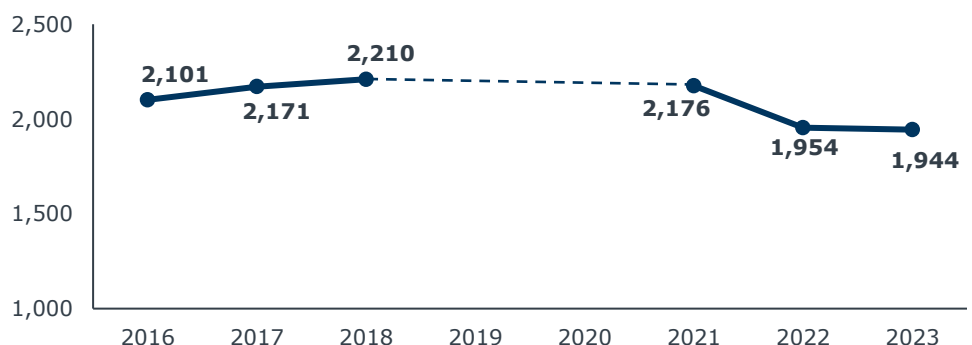


### Largest Decline

#### Swimming and Diving Shows Signs of Decline

Participation in swimming and diving was down 7% by 2023, despite growing before the pandemic.

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



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.