

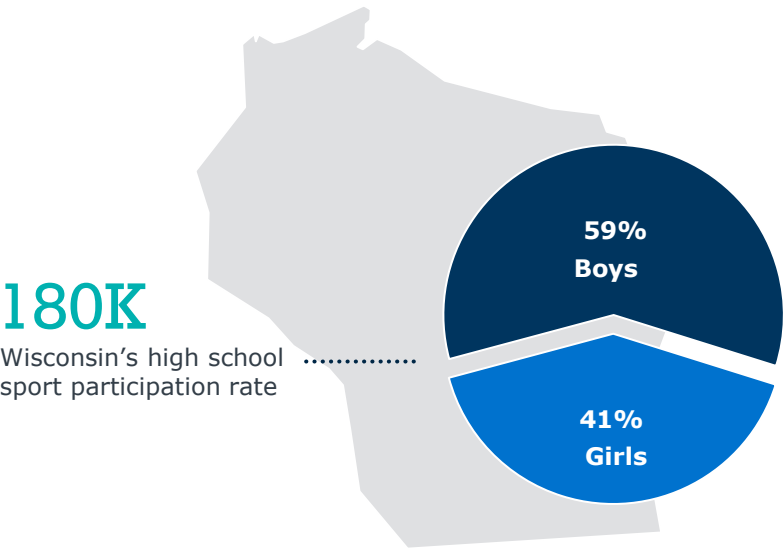
High School Sports Participation State Profile

State Profile: Wisconsin

Boys Account for Most High School Sport Participation

As of 2023-2024, the high school sports participation rate was just over 180,540 in Wisconsin. Mirroring the national trend, boys accounted for more than half of participation.

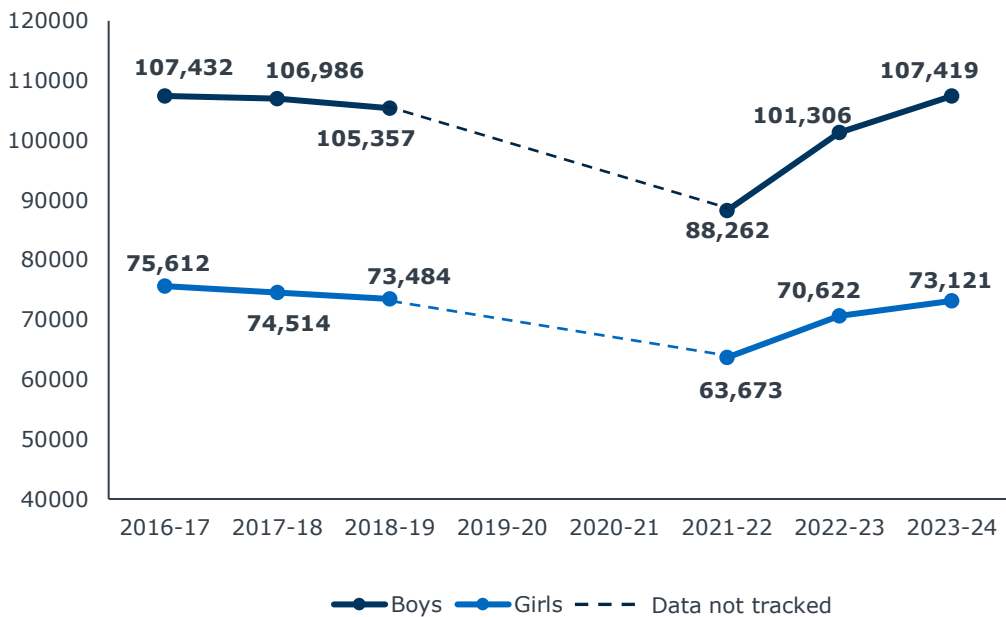
High School Sport Participation, Share of Girls v. Boys, 2023-24
n = 180,540



Gap Between Boys, Girls Persists After Pandemic

Participation in high school sports has declined in Wisconsin over the last eight years. While boys saw a sharper decline during the pandemic, they also have recovered faster, returning to 2016 levels. Meanwhile, girls' participation is down 3% since.

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



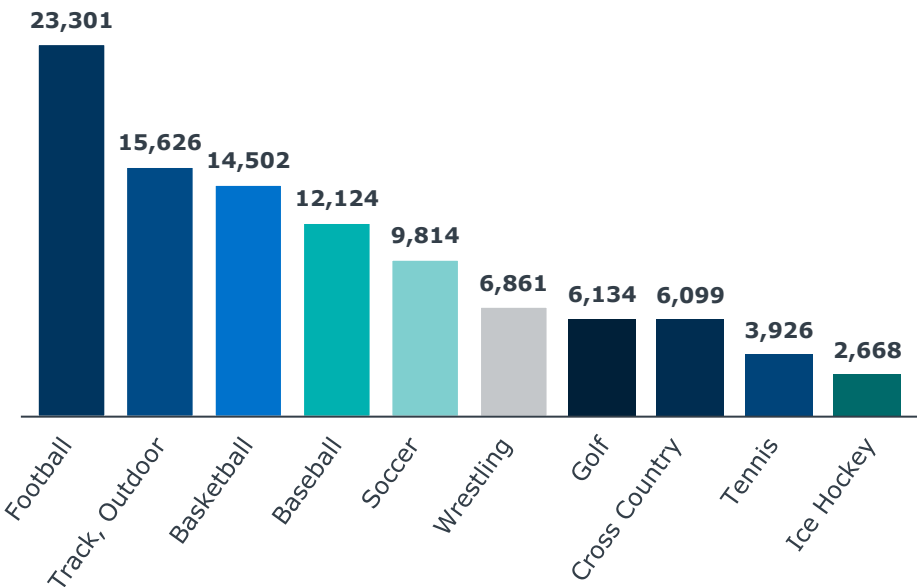
Source: EAB analysis of National Federation of State High School Association data.

Top Boys' and Girls' Sports

Ice Hockey Emerges As a Top Sport

Like most states, football was the biggest boys sport as of 2023-2024. The remaining top sports in the state largely reflect national trends. The biggest deviation was ice hockey. The 10th largest sport in Wisconsin is not in the top 10 nationally.

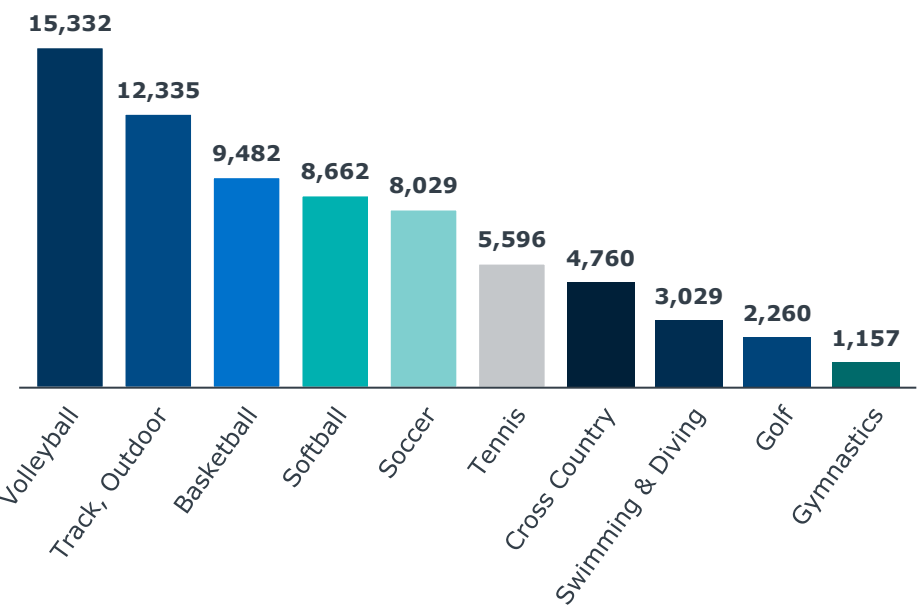
Top 10 Boys Sports by Participation Rate, 2022-2023
N = 107,419



Golf, Gymnastics Break Into Top 10

The top girls' sports in Wisconsin mostly reflect national trends. The biggest deviations were golf and gymnastics, the ninth and 10th largest sport in the state, respectively. Neither sport is in the top 10 among girls nationally.

Top 10 Girls Sports by Participation Rate, 2023-2024
N = 73,121



Short- and Long-Term Changes in Participation

Boys

Areas of Consistent Growth

Six sports grew both in the last year and across the last 10 years. This trend may signal emerging and/or sustainable recruitment areas. They included:

- Football, 8-Player
- Golf
- Ice Hockey
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Volleyball
- Wrestling

Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Swimming and 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
Football, 11-Player	23,301	5%	-8%
Track and Field, Outdoor	15,626	11%	10%
Basketball	14,502	-0.3%	-1%
Baseball	12,124	-3%	-3%
Soccer	9,814	4%	-5%
Wrestling	6,861	9%	6%
Golf	6,134	11%	11%
Cross Country	6,099	3%	-13%
Tennis	3,926	17%	-11%
Ice Hockey	2,668	6%	5%
Swimming and Diving	2,099	-1%	-17%
Volleyball	1,728	7%	8%
Football, 8-Player	1,346	18%	218%
Lacrosse	1,191	N/A	N/A

Biggest, Fastest-Growing, Largest-Declining Sports

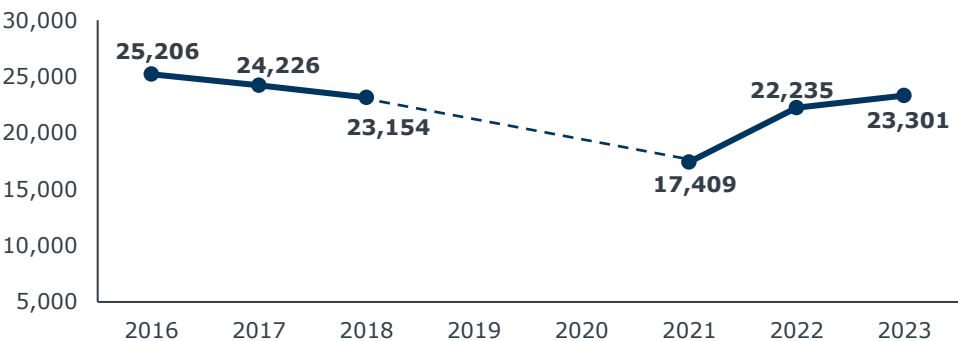
Boys

Biggest Sport

11-Player Football Down, Showing Signs of Recovery

Overall, participation in 11-player football fell 8% between 2016 and 2023. However, it has show recent signs of growth, with a 34% increase between 2021 and 2023.

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

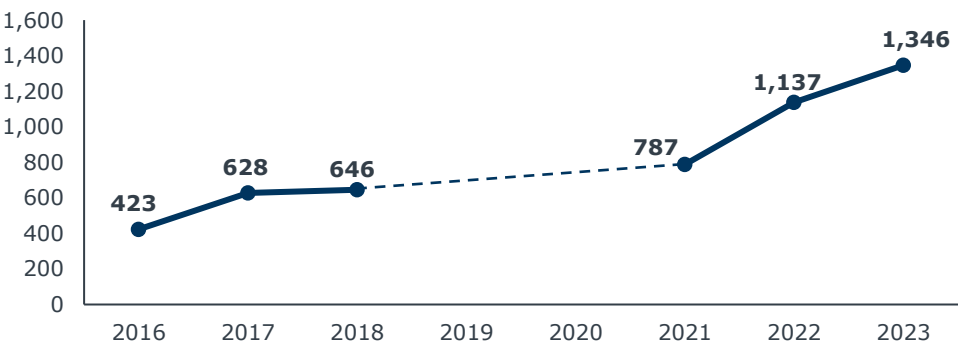


Fastest Growth

Steady Growth in 8-Player Football

In contrast, participation in 8-player football increased every year from 2016 to 202, with 218% total growth.

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

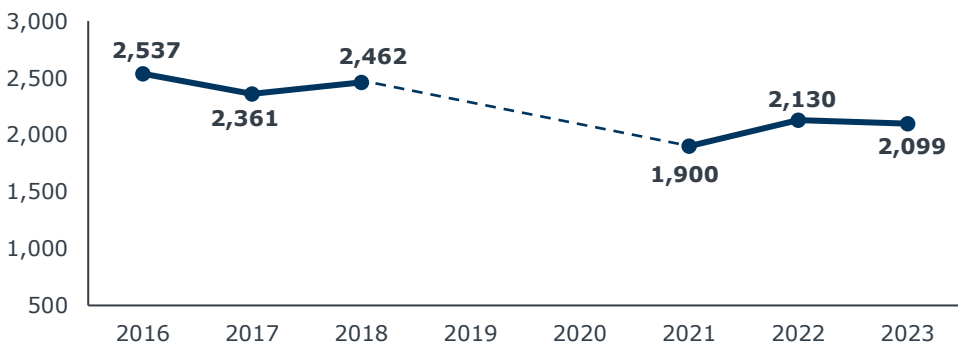


Largest Decline

Swimming in Decline

Participation in swimming and diving fell 17% between 2016 and 2023, despite two years of growth.

Change in Boys' Swimming and 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

There are three sports that grew both in the last year and across the last 10 years. This trend may signal emerging and/or sustainable recruitment areas. They included:

- Golf
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Volleyball

Areas of Steady Decline

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

- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Softball
- Swimming and 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
Volleyball	15,332	1%	2%
Track and Field, Outdoor	12,335	7%	6%
Basketball	9,482	-1%	-11%
Softball	8,662	-2%	-11%
Soccer	8,029	3%	-12%
Tennis	5,596	4%	-1%
Cross Country	4,760	-3%	-25%
Swimming and Diving	3,029	-9%	-18%
Golf	2,260	4%	15%
Gymnastics	1,157	4%	-3%
Lacrosse	1,047	4%	N/A
Ice Hockey	750	7%	-3%
Wrestling	682	596%	N/A

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

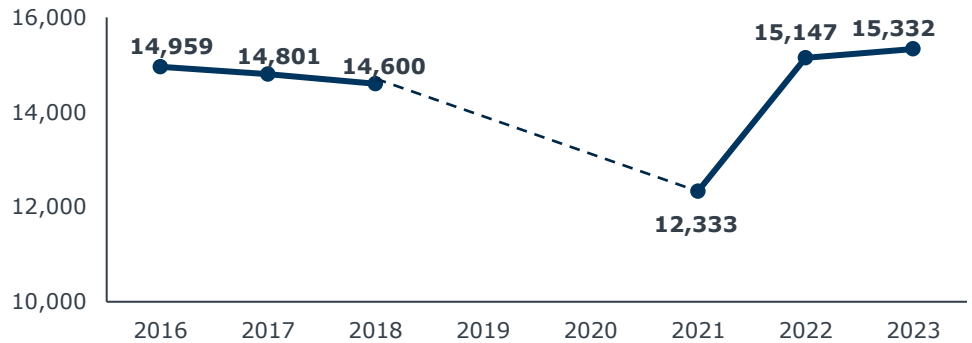
Biggest, Fastest-Growing, Largest-Declining Sports

Biggest Sport

New Growth for Volleyball in Wisconsin

Participation in girls' volleyball is up over 2% since 2016. This growth is especially notable given a trend of decreasing participation before the pandemic. In 2022 and 2023, volleyball participation exceeded pre-pandemic levels.

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

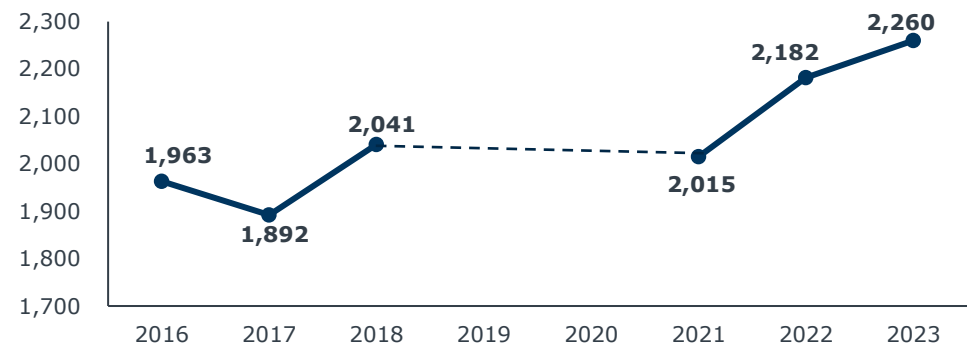


Fastest Growth

Golf on the Rise

Participation in golf increased 15% between 2016 and 2023. The fastest growth occurred in the years after the pandemic.

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

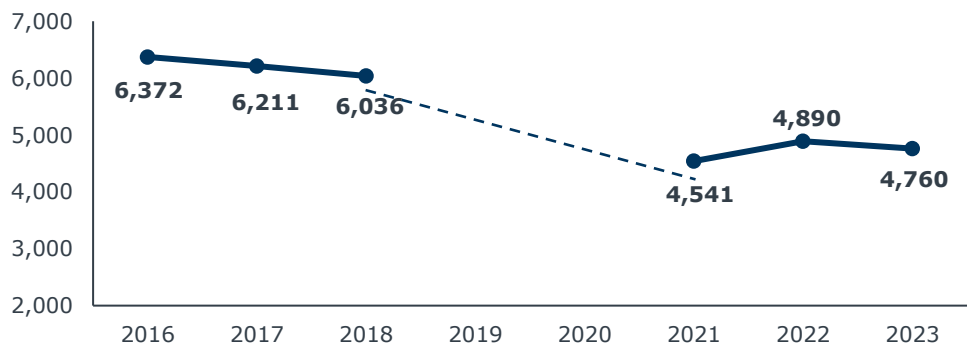


Largest Decline

Cross Country's Decline Predates Pandemic

Participation in cross country, the seventh largest sport among girls, is down 25% since 2016. Participation hit its lowest level after the pandemic but has since recovered slightly (+5% from 2021 to 2023).

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.