

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



**NEWS RELEASE**

**High School Sports Participation Continues Upward Climb**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 23, 2011) — Participation in high school sports increased for the 22<sup>nd</sup> consecutive school year in 2010–11, according to the annual High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

Based on figures from the 50 state high school athletic/activity associations, plus the District of Columbia, that are members of the NFHS, sports participation for the 2010–11 school year reached another record–breaking total of 7,667,955 participants.

Boys and girls participation figures also reached respective all–time highs with 4,494,406 boys and 3,173,549 girls participating in 2010–11 – an overall increase of 39,578 participants from 2009–10.

“While the overall increase was not as much as we’ve seen in the past few years, we are definitely encouraged with these totals given the financial challenges facing our nation’s high schools,” said Bob Gardner, NFHS executive director. “The benefits of education-based athletics at the high school level are well-documented, and we encourage communities throughout the nation to keep these doors of opportunity open.

“Based on the survey, 55.5 percent of students enrolled in high schools participate in athletics, which emphasizes and reinforces the idea that high school sports continue to have a significant role in student involvement in schools across the country.”

Cross country and outdoor track and field gained the most participants in boys sports last year, with increases of 7,340 and 7,179, respectively. Other boys sports with significant jumps were soccer (6,512), basketball (5,637) and lacrosse (5,013). Three sports with lower overall participation totals registered large percentage gains in 2010-11 – fencing (up 38 percent to 2,027 participants), weightlifting (up 12 percent to 22,161 participants) and badminton (up 9.4 percent to 4,693 participants).

Among girls sports, the emerging sport of lacrosse led the way with an additional 6,155 participants – an increase of nine percent from the previous year. With 74,927 participants nationwide, lacrosse cracked the girls Top 10 listing for the first

time as it moved past golf (71,764). Outdoor track and field was close behind lacrosse with an additional 6,088 participants, followed by soccer (5,440), volleyball (5,347) and cross country (2,685).

Sports with lower overall girls participation totals that registered the largest percentage gains were wrestling (up 19.8 percent to 7,351 participants), badminton (up 14 percent to 12,083 participants) and weightlifting (up 11 percent to 8,237 participants).

The top 10 participatory sports for boys remained the same from 2009–10: Eleven–player football led the way with 1,108,441, followed by outdoor track and field (579,302), basketball (545,844), baseball (471,025), soccer (398,351), wrestling (273,732), cross country (246,948), tennis (161,367), golf (156,866) and swimming and diving (133,900).

Outdoor track and field was the top sport for girls again last year with 475,265 participants, followed by basketball (438,933), volleyball (409,332), fast–pitch softball (373,535), soccer (361,556), cross country (204,653), tennis (182,074), swimming and diving (160,881), competitive spirit squads (96,718) and lacrosse (74,927).

Texas and California once again topped the list of participants by state with 786,626 and 774,767, respectively, followed by New York (388,527), Illinois (350,144),

Ohio (328,430), Pennsylvania (316,687), Michigan (314,354), New Jersey (255,893), Florida (245,079) and Minnesota (234,901).

Although the rise in girls participation numbers was not as large this past year (due, in part, to significant drops in competitive spirit numbers in two states), the percentage increase rate has more than doubled the rate for boys during the past 20 years – 63 percent to 31 percent. Twenty years ago, girls constituted 36 percent of the total number of participants; this past year, that number has climbed to 41 percent. In Oklahoma, the number of girls participants actually exceeded the number of boys this past year – 44,112 to 42,694.

The participation survey has been compiled since 1971 by the NFHS through numbers it receives from its member associations. The complete 2010–11 High School Athletics Participation Survey is available on the NFHS Web site at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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**Schools****Participants**

1. Basketball 1,108,441	18,150	1. Football – 11–Player	
2. Track and Field – Outdoor	15,954	2. Track and Field – Outdoor	579,302
3. Baseball 545,844	15,863	3. Basketball	
4. Football – 11–Player	14,279	4. Baseball	471,025
5. Cross Country	14,097	5. Soccer	398,351
6. Golf	13,681	6. Wrestling	273,732
7. Soccer	11,503	7. Cross Country	246,948
8. Wrestling	10,407	8. Tennis	161,367
9. Tennis	9,839	9. Golf	156,866
10. Swimming & Diving	6,899	10. Swimming & Diving	133,900

**TEN MOST POPULAR GIRLS PROGRAMS****Schools****Participants**

1. Basketball 475,265	17,767	1. Track and Field – Outdoor	
2. Track and Field – Outdoor 438,933	16,030	2. Basketball	
3. Volleyball	15,479	3. Volleyball	409,332
4. Softball – Fast Pitch	15,338	4. Softball – Fast Pitch	373,535
5. Cross Country	13,839	5. Soccer	361,556
6. Soccer	11,047	6. Cross Country	204,653
7. Tennis	10,181	7. Tennis	182,074
8. Golf	9,609	8. Swimming & Diving	160,881
9. Swimming & Diving	7,164	9. Competitive Spirit Squads	96,718
10. Competitive Spirit Squads 74,927	4,266	10. Lacrosse	

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.6 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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