

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



**NEWS RELEASE**

**High School Sports Participation Achieves All-time High**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 23, 2012) — Boosted by continued growth in several girls sports, participation in high school sports increased for the 23<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year in 2011–12, 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 51 NFHS–member state high school athletic/activity associations, which includes the District of Columbia, sports participation for the 2011–12 school year reached an all–time high of 7,692,520 participants – an increase of 24,565 from the previous year.

“In this time of ever–increasing financial challenges in our nation’s high schools, we are greatly encouraged to know that participation in high school sports continues to

rise,” said Bob Gardner, NFHS executive director. “With more than 55 percent of students enrolled in high schools participating in athletics, the value of these programs in an education-based setting continues to be significant.”

An additional 33,984 girls participated in high school sports last year, making the all-time record total 3,207,533. This also marks the 23<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year for an increase in the number of female participants. Outdoor track and field (468,747), basketball (435,885) and volleyball (418,903) continued to be the top three participatory sports for girls, with volleyball up 9,571 participants from 2010-11.

Soccer (370,975) surpassed fast-pitch softball (367,023) as the fourth most-popular girls sport, up 9,419 from last year, while cross country (212,262), tennis (180,870), swimming and diving (160,456), competitive spirit squads (108,307) and lacrosse (74,993) completed the top 10. Along with soccer and volleyball, cross country, competitive spirit squads and lacrosse all had increased participation from 2010-11.

While girls participation continued to climb, boys participation figures dipped for the first time since the 1992-93 school year, down 9,419 from last year’s number of 4,494,406 to 4,484,987. Seven of the top 10 boys sports registered drops in participation, with 11-player football (1,095,993), outdoor track and field (575,628), basketball (535,289), wrestling (272,149), tennis (159,800), golf (152,725) and

swimming and diving (133,823) all down from last year. Baseball (474,219), soccer (411,757) and cross country (248,494) all had increases from the previous year, with soccer registering the largest increase of 13,406.

Lacrosse, which ranks No. 11 in participation among boys sports, topped the 100,000 mark (100,641) with about 5,000 additional participants. Wrestling continued its rise in popularity among girls, with almost 1,000 additional participants up to 8,235.

Participants by state stayed true to last year's order, as Texas and California once again topped the list with 808,806 and 781,912, respectively, followed by New York (389,475), Illinois (346,896), Ohio (333,349), Pennsylvania (317,869), Michigan (308,080), New Jersey (259,219), Florida (257,282) and Minnesota (238,363). Twenty states registered increases in participation in 2011-12.

The participation survey has been compiled since 1971 by the NFHS through numbers it receives from its member associations. The complete 2011-12 High School Athletics Participation Survey is available on the NFHS Web site at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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*This press release was written by Shane Monaghan, graphic arts technician/editorial assistant in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department.*

**About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

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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### TEN MOST POPULAR BOYS PROGRAMS

Schools	Participants	
1. Basketball 1,095,993	18,099	1. Football – 11-Player
2. Track and Field – Outdoor	16,218	2. Track and Field – Outdoor 575,628

3. Baseball	15,838	3. Basketball	
535,289			
4. Football – 11–Player	14,241	4. Baseball	474,219
5. Cross Country	14,155	5. Soccer	411,757
6. Golf	13,624	6. Wrestling	272,149
7. Soccer	11,600	7. Cross Country	248,494
8. Wrestling	10,407	8. Tennis	159,800
9. Tennis	9,841	9. Golf	152,725
10. Swimming & Diving	7,001	10. Swimming & Diving	133,823

### TEN MOST POPULAR GIRLS PROGRAMS

Schools		Participants	
1. Basketball		17,768	1. Track and Field – Outdoor
468,747			
2. Track and Field – Outdoor	16,143		2. Basketball
435,885			
3. Volleyball	15,569		3. Volleyball
4. Softball – Fast Pitch	14,142		4. Soccer
5. Cross Country	13,970		5. Softball – Fast Pitch
6. Soccer	11,127		6. Cross Country
7. Tennis	10,058		7. Tennis
8. Golf	9,667		8. Swimming & Diving
9. Swimming & Diving	7,221		9. Competitive Spirit Squads
10. Competitive Spirit Squads	4,916		10. Lacrosse
74,993			