

EAST LANSING, Mich. – July 8 – Eight high school sports for which postseason tournaments are sponsored by the Michigan High School Athletic Association enjoyed gains in participation during the 2014-15 school year. However, total participation in MHSAA sports decreased slightly for the fourth straight school year, following a continuing trend of declining member school enrollments.

A total of 282,623 participants took part in the 28 tournament sports offered by the MHSAA during the past year – a 1.95-percent decrease from the 2013-14 figure of 288,230. However, enrollments at member schools also decreased 1.24 percent from 2013-14 and have fallen 11.1 percent since the 2006-07 school year – while MHSAA participation has fallen only 9.7 percent during that time. This year's dip was only slightly larger than the 1.9-percent decrease from 2012-13 to 2013-14.

Overall boys participation fell 1.5 percent from 2013-14 to 2014-15, while girls participation fell 2.6 percent. The overall MHSAA totals count students once for each sport in which they participate, meaning students who are multiple-sport athletes are counted more than once.

Girls lacrosse was the only MHSAA sport to set a participation record during 2014-15, with 2,589 athletes (an increase of 1.9 percent) this spring, and has set a participation record every season since becoming a sponsored tournament sport in 2005. However, boys lacrosse, which also became tournament sponsored in 2005, saw its first decrease in participation, falling 2.6 percent to 4,958 athletes despite five schools adding programs to bring that total to 130.

Baseball participation increased for the fourth straight school year, this season six tenths of a percent to 18,333 athletes. The other six sports that saw increased participation during 2014-15 all bounced back from decreases between 2012-13 and 2013-14. Boys bowling increased 4.2 percent to 3,724 athletes, its second-highest total as an MHSAA tournament sport. Both boys skiing (4.0 percent increase to 775 athletes) and girls skiing (1.4 percent to 671) also saw higher participation after two seasons of declines. Girls competitive cheer (1.0 percent to 7,189 athletes), girls gymnastics (3.0 percent to 618) and boys soccer (1.0 percent to 14,426) also saw bounce-back years after dips the school year before.

However, two of the most popular girls sports continued to experience downward trends. Girls basketball participation fell for the ninth straight season, to 15,702 athletes, the sport's lowest total since records first were kept in 1991-92. The girls basketball total has decreased 18 percent since a U.S. District Court decision led to the switching of girls basketball season from fall to winter beginning in 2007-08. Comparatively, girls enrollment at MHSAA schools during that time has fallen 11.6 percent.

The sport that swapped seasons with girls basketball and moved to fall, volleyball, saw a 3.3-percent drop in participation this school year to 17,996 athletes, its fewest since 1991-92 and a decrease of 16.5 percent since its final season as a winter sport.

Also of note in this year's survey:

- Total, eight sports saw increases in participation in 2014-15 (four boys, four girls), while 20 experienced decreases (10 boys, 10 girls).
- A recent drop in football participation, 11 and 8-player teams combined, has continued to slow, the total this season falling only 1.4 percent to 40,088 athletes. The drop from 2011-12 to 2012-13 was 3.7 percent, and the drop from 2012-13 to 2013-14 was two percent.
- Wrestling saw a decrease for the sixth straight year, this season to 9,475 participants, a 7.9-percent drop from 2013-14 with its lowest total since the collection of data began.
- Girls cross country, after five straight years of increases, fell back 4.1 percent, to 8,350 athletes, although that total still represented the third highest of the last seven seasons. The trend was identical for boys cross country, except this season's total of 8,786 athletes was down only 1.1 percent from a year ago and the second-highest over the seven-season string.
- Swimming and diving saw the largest decrease among a pair of related sports; girls participation fell six percent to 4,938 athletes and boys fell 7.4 percent to 5,617 after both had experienced slight increases during the last three school years.
- Boys golf participation fell for the sixth straight season, to 6,533 athletes, its lowest since 1991-92.

The participation figures are gathered annually from MHSAA member schools to submit to the National Federation of State High School Associations for compiling of its national participation survey. Results of Michigan surveys from the 2000-01 school year to present may be viewed on the MHSAA Website – www.mhsaa.com – by clicking on **Schools > Administrators > Sports Participation Listing**.

The following chart shows participation figures for the 2014-15 school year from MHSAA member schools for sports in which the Association sponsors a postseason tournament:

BOYS

GIRLS

SPORT	SCHOOLS (A)	PARTICIPANTS	SCHOOLS (A)	PARTICIPANTS (B)
Baseball	639/650/6	18,325	-	-/8
Basketball	726/733/5	21,401	665/726	15,702/14
Bowling	355/371/9	3,711	339/366	2,970/13
Competitive Cheer	-	-	335/348	7,189
Cross Country	605/639/0	8,786	587/637	8,350/0
Football –	597/621/59	39,338	-	-/65

11 player				
8- player	33/38/0	685	-	-
Golf	503/532/46	6,460	325/331	3,334/73
Gymnastics	-	-	66/75	618
Ice Hockey	232/269/11	3,448	-	-/15
Lacrosse	130/137/3	4,955	88/91	2,589/3
Skiing	87/100/0	775	90/98	671/0
Soccer	466/495/16	14,370	459/479	13,333/56
Softball	-	-	570/635	13,113
Swimming & Diving	233/264/3	4,935	256/275	5,617/3
Tennis	299/316/6	6,294	335/345	8,628/11
Track & Field	661/684/0	22,439	645/681	16,855/0
Volleyball	-	-	646	17,996
Wrestling	445/480/66	9,387	-	-/88

(A) The first number is the number of schools reporting sponsorship on the Sports Participation Survey. The second number indicates schools sponsoring the sport including primary and secondary schools in cooperative programs as of May 7, 2015. The third number indicates the number of schools that had girls playing on teams consisting primarily of boys.

(B)The second number indicates the number of additional girls playing on teams consisting primarily of boys and entered in boys competition.