

EAST LANSING, Mich. – June 12 – Participation in high school sports in which postseason tournaments are sponsored by the Michigan High School Athletic Association dropped for the second straight school year in 2012-13. However, the decrease remained in step with a recent decline in member school enrollment.

A total of 293,810 participants took part in the 28 tournament sports offered by the Association during the past year – a 1.2 percent decrease from the 2011-12 figure of 297,317. However, that participation decrease nearly matched the overall drop in member schools' enrollment of 1.1 percent over the last two years and was smaller than the 1.5-percent dip experienced from 2010-11 to 2011-12. Overall girls participation fell 1.3 percent from 2011-12, slightly less than the 1.4 percent drop in girls enrollment. Boys participation dropped 1.1 percent, while boys enrollment dropped only 0.8 percent.

Participation has fallen slower than enrollment over recent years. Since 2006-07, the enrollment at MHSAA schools is down from 531,903 to 482,391 – a drop of 9.3 percent. But participation during that time has dropped only 6.2 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.

Records were set in four sports in 2012-13 – boys lacrosse (5,065), girls lacrosse (2,501), boys cross country (8,744) and girls cross country (8,378). Both lacrosse totals have increased annually during their nine years as MHSAA tournament sports. Boys cross country participation increased for the fourth straight season and is up 11.2 percent over the last seven years. Girls cross country participation also increased for the fourth straight year.

But a number of troubling trends continued. Girls basketball participation fell for the seventh straight season to 16,550 participants, the sport's fewest since records first were kept in 1991-92. The girls basketball total has decreased 13.5 percent since a U.S. District Court decision led to the switching of girls basketball season from fall to winter beginning in 2007-08. Girls enrollment during that time has fallen 9.7 percent.

The sport that swapped seasons with girls basketball and moved to fall, volleyball, saw a 2.5 percent drop in participation this school year to 19,905 athletes, its fewest since 1994-95 and a drop of 7.6 percent since its final season as a winter sport.

Lower Peninsula girls and boys golf and girls and boys tennis seasons were both switched as a result of the Federal Court decision, and those sports continue to experience declines. Girls tennis participation fell 5.6 percent from a year ago and for the second straight season, and boys tennis fell 3.6 percent from 2011-12 and for the fourth straight year; total, boys tennis participation has decreased 22.9 percent since its final spring season in 2007.

Boys golf participation fell less than a percent, 0.9, but for the fourth straight year. Girls golf participation fell a staggering 5.1 percent over the last year to 3,335 participants, its fewest since 1997-98.

Also of note in this year's survey:

- Total, 11 sports had increases in participation in 2012-13 (seven boys, four girls), while 17 had drops (seven boys, 10 girls).
- Football participation, 11 and 8-player teams combined, dropped 3.7 percent from the 2011 season to 41,507 athletes. That total was the lowest since 1995-96.
- Wrestling saw a drop for the fourth straight year, but a far bigger fall in 2012-13 – 4.8 percent from the year before with 534 fewer participants and only 10,513 total. They made up the fewest in the sport since 1995-96.
- While girls basketball fell again, boys basketball broke a three-year string of drops in participation with an increase of 1.2 percent to 22,223 athletes.
- After slight drops between 2010-11 and 2011-12, both girls and boys bowling rebounded with slight increases of 1.1 and 1.8 percent, respectively. Baseball also reversed a one-year slide with a 0.4 percent increase in 2012-13.
- The boys sport experiencing the most growth was swimming and diving, with an increase of 5.6 percent to 5,612 athletes, its most since 1995-96.
- Girls track and field participation was up one percent in 2012-13, but gymnastics joined those previously mentioned with a much larger percentage decrease than the overall drop in girls enrollment, falling 3.9 percent from 2011-12.
- Boys skiing also dropped significantly, 4.2 percent, from the year before – although the 2011-12 total of 861 athletes was a five-year high.

The participation figures are gathered annually from MHSAA member schools to submit to the National Federation of State High School Associations for compiling its national participation survey. Results of Michigan surveys from the 2000-01 school year to the 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 2012-13 school year from MHSAA member schools for sports in which the Association sponsors a postseason tournament:

| SPORT | BOYS | | GIRLS | |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| | SCHOOLS (A) | PARTICIPANTS | SCHOOLS (A) | PARTICIPANTS (B) |
| Baseball | 639/651/2 | 18,092 | - | 0/3 |
| Basketball | 738/742/2 | 22,186 | 683/732 | 16,550/37 |
| Bowling | 343/353/5 | 3,693 | 332/352 | 2,983/11 |
| Competitive Cheer | - | - | 325/335 | 7,374 |
| Cross Country | 601/622/0 | 8,744 | 585/618 | 8,378/0 |
| Football - 11 player | 637/667/40 | 41,138 | - | 0/43 |

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|----------------------|------------|--------|---------|------------|
| 8- player | 16/32/2 | 323 | - | 3 |
| Golf | 532/549/55 | 6,938 | 319/329 | 3,335/95 |
| Gymnastics | - | - | 61/71 | 675 |
| Ice Hockey | 243/270/16 | 3,791 | 22/0 | 301/17 |
| Lacrosse | 124/124/1 | 5,064 | 89/88 | 2,501/1 |
| Skiing-Alpine | 94/104/0 | 825 | 94/105 | 682/0 |
| Soccer | 485/496/21 | 14,273 | 463/474 | 13,481/107 |
| Softball | - | - | 622/639 | 14,491 |
| Swimming & Diving | 254/269/6 | 5,547 | 267/280 | 5,996/65 |
| Tennis | 310/327/10 | 6,504 | 343/355 | 9,211/65 |
| Track & Field | 662/684/0 | 23,188 | 650/675 | 16,983/0 |
| Volleyball | - | - | 706/715 | 19,905 |
| Wrestling | 469/485/78 | 10,374 | 42/0 | 211/139 |

(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 9, 2013. 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.