

Iowa Stays at 19th Nationally in NFHS Student Athletic Participation Survey

For the 16th consecutive year Iowa's participation in education-based athletics stayed 19th nationally in a survey released recently by the National Federation of State Associations. Iowa's 137,777 participants included 81,129 boys and 56,648 girls.

The rank is particularly impressive in light of the fact that the state ranks 31st in population and the 18 states with participation rates higher than Iowa each have a significantly higher population. The participation numbers for each the boys and girls rank 20th among the states.

Upon reviewing the latest figures, IHSAA Executive Director Alan Beste noted, "The participation numbers are evidence that Iowans continue to value education-based athletics. We want parents to feel confident their children are participating in an environment that seeks to minimize risk. Our coaches are among the best trained in the nation, especially when it comes to safety and putting the well-being of the students before winning. Winning may be a desired by-product of education-based athletics, but the primary purpose is to help prepare students for life beyond high school."

He emphasized, "When students participate in education-based activities, the odds are much better those students will establish a positive relationship with at least one coach/advisor and that positive relationship will help them succeed in high school and become more productive citizens later in life. I am very proud of all those who encourage, and support, students' involvement in education-based activities."

Football and volleyball rank as the top participation sports for Iowa boys and girls respectively. Track and field is second for each gender with basketball ranking third for boys and fourth for girls.

Given the participation figures and factoring in enrollments it is estimated that nearly 80% of Iowa high school students are engaged in at least one sport and over 70% are in multiple activities.

The top participation sports and their Iowa rank for each gender follow in the table below with the national rank of the sport in parenthesis.

TOP PARTICIPATION SPORTS OF IOWA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

<u>Boys' Sport (National Rank)</u>	<u>Iowa Athletes</u>	<u>Girls' Sport (National Rank)</u>	<u>Iowa Athletes</u>
1) Football (1)	18,807(both 11 & 8)	1) Volleyball (2)	11,722
2) Track & Field (2)	11,923	2) Track & Field (1)	9,631
3) Basketball (3)	11,106	3) Softball (5)	7,927
4) Baseball (4)	10,445	4) Basketball (3)	7,576
5) Wrestling (7)	6,586	5) Soccer (4)	5,423
6) Soccer (5)	6,302	6) Cross Country (6)	4,732
7) Cross Country (6)	5,505	7) Tennis (8)	3,419
8) Golf (9)	4,849	8) Golf (11)	3,092
9) Tennis (8)	2,382	9) Swimming & Diving (7)	1,659
10) Bowling (NR)*	1,801	10) Bowling (NR)*	1,315
11) Swimming (10)	1,467	11) Wrestling (NR)*	99

() denotes national rank

*Note: Survey does not take into account multiple sport athletes. Each sport is treated separately. * Not ranked because 23 or fewer states offer the sport.*

In spite of funding issues in many high schools across the country and grade sharing and co-op programs among schools, participation in high school sports in the nation has never been higher - increasing for the 28th consecutive year and establishing records for both girls' and boys' participants.

The survey figures come from a survey of the member schools of the 50 state high school athletic/activity associations, plus the District of Columbia and reflect participation for the 2016-17 school year. The figure is an all-time high of 7,963,535 including 3,400,297 females and 4,563,238 males.