



# NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

PO Box 690, Indianapolis, IN 46206

317-972-6900, FAX 317.822.5700/www.nfhs.org

## High school athletics participation breaks 7 million mark

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Bruce Howard or John Gillis**

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (September 1, 2005) — The number of participants in high school athletics increased for the 16<sup>th</sup> consecutive year in 2004-05 and topped 7 million for the first time in history.

Based on figures from the 50 state high school athletic/activity associations, plus the District of Columbia, that are members of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), participation for the 2004-05 school year rose by 115,157 students, to 7,018,709, according to the 2004-05 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS. The survey also determined that nearly 53 percent of students enrolled in high schools participate in athletics.

“We are thrilled to have more than 7 million students in our nation’s high schools participating in athletic programs,” said Robert F. Kanaby, NFHS executive director. “The consistent increase in participation among the youth of our country and the fact that well over half of all enrolled students are competing in high school activities are true testaments to the impact these activities have on millions of lives across the country.”

In addition to overall numbers, the girls participation total of 2,908,390 set an all-time record. The boys total also increased, reaching 4,110,319, the highest participation in the past 27 years. This year’s boys participation figure is second only to the record 4,367,442 in 1977-78.

Track and field gained the most female participants in 2004-05 with 9,212, followed by soccer with 7,072, indoor track and field with 5,237, and cross country with 4,163, which moved that sport from seventh to sixth in popularity.

Eleven-player football gained the most participants among boys sports in 2004-05 with 12,812, followed by outdoor track and field with 11,902 additional participants, swimming and diving (7,192), lacrosse (6,557) and cross country (5,291).

Some of the emerging sports had the largest percentage increases in participants. Bowling registered the largest percentage increase among boys sports with a 14 percent jump (from 17,654 to 20,534), followed closely by lacrosse with an 11 percent increase (from 53,436 to 59,993). Among girls sports, bowling (13 percent), lacrosse (10 percent), and indoor track and field (10 percent) registered the largest percentage increases.

Thanks to the start of snowboarding programs in California, that sport registered the largest percentage gains in the number of schools sponsoring programs at 85 percent for boys and 89 percent for girls.

Basketball remained the most popular sport for girls with 456,543 participants, followed by outdoor track and field (428,198), volleyball (386,022), fast pitch softball (364,759), soccer (316,104), cross country (170,450), tennis (169,292), swimming and diving (148,154), competitive spirit squads (84,416) and golf (64,245).

On the boys' side, 11-player football was again the most popular sport with 1,045,494 participants, followed by basketball (545,497), outdoor track and field (516,703), baseball (459,717), soccer (354,587), wrestling (243,009), cross country (201,719), golf (161,025), tennis (148,530), and swimming and diving (103,754).

Texas remained the state with the most participants with 740,052, followed by California (678,019), New York (350,349), Michigan (311,814), Illinois (310,791), Ohio (310,585), Pennsylvania (262,859), Minnesota (233,070) New Jersey (228,388) and Florida (219,040).

The participation survey has been compiled since 1971 by the NFHS through numbers it receives from its member associations. The complete 2004-05 Participation Survey will be available soon on the NFHS Web site <[www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)>.

#### TEN MOST POPULAR BOYS PROGRAMS

Schools		Participants	
1. Basketball	17,482	1. Football – 11-Player	1,045,494
2. Track and Field – Outdoor	15,294	2. Basketball	545,497
3. Baseball	15,161	3. Track and Field – Outdoor	516,703
4. Football – 11-Player	13,671	4. Baseball	459,717
5. Golf	13,152	5. Soccer	354,587
6. Cross Country	12,727	6. Wrestling	243,009
7. Soccer	10,392	7. Cross Country	201,719
8. Wrestling	9,562	8. Golf	161,025
9. Tennis	9,426	9. Tennis	148,530
10. Swimming & Diving	5,878	10. Swimming & Diving	103,754

#### TEN MOST POPULAR GIRLS PROGRAMS

Schools		Participants	
1. Basketball	17,175	1. Basketball	456,543
2. Track and Field – Outdoor	15,213	2. Track and Field – Outdoor	428,198
3. Volleyball	14,526	3. Volleyball	386,022
4. Softball – Fast Pitch	14,493	4. Softball – Fast Pitch	364,759

5. Cross Country	12,345	5. Soccer	316,104
6. Soccer	9,695	6. Cross Country	170,450
7. Tennis	9,646	7. Tennis	169,292
8. Golf	8,249	8. Swimming & Diving	148,154
9. Swimming & Diving	6,238	9. Competitive Spirit Squad	84,416
10. Competitive Spirit Squads	3,482	10. Golf	64,245

###

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Bruce Howard or John Gillis (317)972-6900