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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2004

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Girls Participation Numbers Hit New High in 2003-04

EAST LANSING, Mich. – June 23 – For the second straight year, girls' participation in high school sports set a new record at Michigan High School Athletic Association member schools across the state during the 2003-04 school year.

The total of 124,978 female participants in sports in which the Association sponsors post-season tournaments during the past school year topped last year's mark of 124,393. Among all student-athletes, a total of 293,957 took part, falling just short of the 294,012 record set a year ago. Boys participation was the second highest ever, the 168,979 figure just behind the 2002-03 high of 169,619. The totals count students once for each sport in which he or she participates, meaning students who are multiple-sport athletes are counted more than once. The participation figures in MHSAA tournament sports for girls are up 19 percent since the 1994-95 school year. Boys are up nine percent over the same time period, and overall participation is up 13 percent.

Volleyball continues to be the most popular sport for girls, with 21,320 participants in 2003-04. Girls sports hitting their all-time highs in participation last year were competitive cheer and soccer.

The most popular boys sport continues to be football, with 42,717 participants last year. The only boys sport to hit a new participation high in 2003-04 was ice hockey.

Bowling, the newest MHSAA post-season tournament sport, had 1,866 boys participants and 1,480 girls in its inaugural 2003-04 school year. Lacrosse joins the MHSAA schedule in the spring of 2005.

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. The results of the survey from the 2000-01 school year to the present may be viewed on the NFHS Web Site – www.nfhs.org. Nationwide results for 2003-04 will be available later this summer.

The following chart shows participation figures for the 2003-04 school year from MHSAA member schools in sports in which the Association sponsors a post-season tournament:

(more)

2-2-2 – 2003-04 Sports Participation Figures

SPORT	Boys		Girls	
	SCHOOLS (A)	PARTICIPANTS	SCHOOLS (A)	PARTICIPANTS
Baseball	622 / 653	19,082		4*
Basketball	732 / 738	23,788	718 / 719	20,661 / 5*
Bowling	163 / 199	1,866	151 / 198	1,477 / 3*
Competitive Cheer			171 / 149	4,387
Cross Country	575 / 622	7,575	562 / 622	6,710
Football - 11 player	608 / 635	42,717		32*
Golf	569 / 572	8,048	306 / 308	3,910 / 71*
Gymnastics			84 / 102	989
Ice Hockey	201 / 228	3,776		4*
Skiing-Alpine	91 / 102	955	88 / 103	733 / 6*
Soccer	445 / 450	14,234	399 / 400	13,515 / 130*
Softball-Fast Pitch			605 / 635	16,772
Swimming & Diving	243 / 269	4,553	256 / 278	6,588 / 69*
Tennis	340 / 356	8,194	338 / 350	8,917 / 116*
Track & Field - Outdoor	636 / 667	22,849	691 / 714	18,347
Volleyball			691 / 714	21,320
Wrestling	470 / 482	11,342		176*

(A) The second number indicates the total number of schools that sponsored the sport in MHSAA tournaments, including secondary schools in cooperative programs, as of May 26, 2004.

* Indicates the number of additional girls playing on teams consisting primarily of boys and entered in boys competition.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,500 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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