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Michigan's Girls Rank Fourth Again Nationally In High School Sports Participation

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Sept. 19 – Participation by girls in high school sports in Michigan, which hit an all-time high during the 2005-06 with 135,377; again ranks fourth nationally, and participation rates in five boys sports moved up on the charts in figures released last week by the National Federation of State High School Associations.

Michigan's girls participation held its own, trailing only the largest populated states of California, Texas and New York; and staying ahead of the more densely population states of Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. According to 2005 U.S. Census Bureau figures, Michigan continues to rank eighth in both females and males of ages 14 through 17.

Participation in five boys sports – basketball, bowling, golf, swimming and diving, and track and field – all moved up nationally in 2005-06. Michigan now ranks third for boys in basketball, bowling, and track and field; and fifth in golf and swimming and diving. Track and field moved up two notches from a year ago, while the other sports each rose one spot in the charts.

All other boys sports positions remained unchanged from a year ago. Ice hockey and skiing still rank third; tennis is still fourth; cross country, football and wrestling are still fifth; lacrosse continues to hold onto sixth place; baseball is seventh; and soccer is in eighth place.

The most popular participation sport in Michigan for girls – volleyball – rose on the national list to third. Other sports rising on the charts were competitive cheer to fifth place, and gymnastics to tenth place. Holding the same spots as last year were bowling and tennis in third; cross country and golf in fifth; soccer in sixth; and softball in seventh. Slipping one spot from the 2004-05 survey results were skiing in third place; basketball in fourth place; and swimming and diving in fifth place.

Michigan's all-time overall participation mark of 321,250 was good for fifth place in 2005-06, less than 2,000 behind Illinois, and down one place from a year ago as the two states switched positions in the final numbers. Boys participation in the NFSH survey for the past year ranked sixth with 185,873. Michigan's girl's participation has set records for four consecutive years.

National participation in high school sports in 2005-06 was up to 7,159,904, setting a new record.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,800 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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