



michigan high school athletic association

# media information

1661 ramblewood drive east lansing, mi 48823 517.332.5046 fax-517.332.4071 www.mhsaa.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 23, 2008

Contact: John Johnson or Andy Frushour

517.332.5046 or [media@mhsaa.com](mailto:media@mhsaa.com)

MHSAA Web Site Media Page: [www.mhsaa.com/media](http://www.mhsaa.com/media)

## Overall Winter Sports Participation Down Slightly

**EAST LANSING, Mich.** – April 23 – Participation in high school sports at Michigan High School Athletic Association member senior high schools decreased 3.19 percent during the 2007-08 winter season, with numbers down in all activities except boys bowling and Upper Peninsula girls swimming and diving.

These results are based on reports from all 766 MHSAA member senior high schools, comparing actual figures at the same schools between the current school year and the 2006-07 school year. The MHSAA routinely collects participation data from member schools to report to the National Federation of State High School Associations.

Boys bowling recorded an all-time high participation rate – 3,381— an increase of 11 (0.33 percent) over 2006-07; and girls swimming and diving in the Upper Peninsula increased to 172 participants, up 41 (43.75 percent) from the year before.

Overall, there were 2,549 fewer participants than a year ago, with over 2,000 of that group coming from a combination of four sports. Girls basketball saw the largest drop in raw numbers, with 688 fewer participants than a year ago, a decrease of 3.64 percent. The total number of girls basketball participants – 18,222 – was the lowest since the MHSAA began tracking participation numbers in 1991-92. Wrestling experienced a decrease of 552 participants, a 4.64 percent drop over last year. Boys basketball was down by 424, a 1.8 percent lower figure; its lowest participation since 1999-2000 and second lowest rate since 1991-92. Girls competitive cheer saw the sharpest drop from a percentage standpoint of the four sports – 4.88 percent – with 379 fewer participants.

From a percentage standpoint, girls gymnastics took the biggest hit this season, down 20.74 percent; its raw numbers dropping from 781 participants to 619 – the lowest since 1991-92. It was the fifth straight year of declining numbers for the sport, which had 1,108 participants in 2002-03. Skiing was also hard hit with drops of just over 10 percent in both genders – 10.93 for girls (85 participants) and 10.13 for boys (95 participants). The boys participation total of 843 and girls figure of 693 were lows since 1991-92. Other sports' decreases were boys swimming and diving at 1.58 percent (78 participants); girls bowling at 1.85 percent (48 participants); and boys ice hockey at 1.97 percent (80 participants).

For the winter, overall boys participation was down 2.5 percent (1,218 participants); and the girls overall were down 4.27 percent (1,331). For the school year to date, overall participation is off less than one percent with a decrease of 1,508 – boys make up 255 of the drop, girls 1,253 (1.8 percent).

The school's responses to the MHSAA Winter Sports Participation Survey also included this information:

- 505 schools reported boys basketball attendance was lower; 106 reported it was higher
- 419 schools reported girls basketball attendance was lower; 171 reported it was higher
- 41 fewer schools made cuts in their girls basketball programs; 16 few schools made cuts in boys programs
- 45 to 49 percent of schools reported it was more difficult to get varsity and junior varsity officials this year

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.

-0-

RL08-072

AT&T, Farm Bureau Insurance, Henry Ford Health Systems & MEEMIC Insurance Company are year-round MHSAA Corporate Partners