

EAST LANSING, Mich. –July 9 – For the fifth straight year in 2008-09, participation numbers for sports in which post-season tournaments are sponsored by the Michigan High School Athletic Association topped the 300,000 mark, even as overall numbers dropped less than a percentage point.

The total for the 2008-09 school year was 304,343, a number that is down 0.9 percent from the 307,112 figure of a year ago and is the fifth highest total in the Association's history. Girls participation was down 1.3 percent from a year ago with 126,366 – its lowest point since 2003-04; and the boys total of 177,977 was down 0.6 percent – its lowest point since 2004-05. 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.

For the second straight year, records for participation were set in five sports – three for girls and two for boys. Bowling and lacrosse each hit again a high-water mark for both boys and girls; and girls tennis also set a new mark.

Fall participation took the biggest single season dip at 2.7 percent, with football and girls swimming and diving each dropping over 1,100. The drop of 1,121 in swimming represented a 17 percent decrease, while the 1,102 slip in football was a 2.4 percent fall. Girls golf participation dropped 6.4 percent. The only fall sport on the plus side was boys tennis by eight players over the previous year.

Winter and spring numbers were relatively stable with a 0.5 percent increase in participation in the winter; and a 0.03 percent decrease in the spring. Girls gymnastics – one of the smallest sports in terms of participation – rebounded from a drop a year ago with a 156 increase in student-athletes – a 25 percent raise. Boys bowling was up 9.1 percent (309 increase), and girls bowling was up 6.7 percent (170 increase). In the springtime, girls tennis had the biggest jump percentage-wise and in raw numbers with an increase of 580 players – 6.1 percent. Between the two seasons, 11 sports saw increases and 9 sports had decreases in participation.

Also of note in this year's survey in other sports of interest:

- Basketball participation from 2007-08 to 2008-09 remained stable. Girls numbers were down 0.2 percent, and boys participation was up 0.3 percent; the girls figure of 18,187 the lowest since the Association began tracking the numbers in 1991-92, the boys total of 23,233 the second lowest in that same time span and the lowest in 10 seasons. Since the 2006-07 survey, girls participation is down 5 percent and the boys number is down 3.6 percent.
- Girls volleyball participation saw of 0.4 percent drop in 2008-09; the lowest it has been since the 1997-98 school year. Since the 2006-07 survey, volleyball participation has dropped 3.5 percent.
- Boys tennis, after a sharp decrease in players a year ago, had an increase of 0.4 percent this past school year. However, since the 2006-07 survey, the sport has had a 12.8 percent drop in participation. By comparison, girls tennis participation is up 2.4 percent in the same time period.

- Boys golf saw an increase of 238 players over a year ago (3.1 percent) and is on the positive side since the 2006-07 survey, up 0.19 percent. Girls golf numbers are off 1.8 percent since the 2006-07 survey.

- And to put these numbers in better perspective, enrollments at MHSAA member schools are down 1.44 percent since the 2006-07 participation survey, and overall participation is down 2.8 percent.

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. Results of Michigan survey from the 2000-01 school year to the present may be viewed on the MHSAA Website – mhsaa.com – and clicking on Administrators under the Users Sections heading.

The following chart shows participation figures for the 2008-09 school year from MHSAA member schools in sports in which the Association sponsors a post-season tournament:

SPORT	BOYS		GIRLS	
	SCHOOLS (A)	PARTICIPANTS	SCHOOLS (A)	PARTICIPANTS (B)
Baseball	643/652/6	18,652	-	0/11
Basketball	745/747/3	23,214	714/735	18,187/19
Bowling	318/328/2	3,687	304/326	2,709/3
Competitive Cheer	-	-	331/332	7,320
Cross Country	596/622	8,356	578/614	7,633
Football - 11 player	636/655/47	45,199	-	0/58
Golf	547/560/49	7,673	343/339	3,609/70
Gymnastics	-	-	72/79	765
Ice Hockey	231/257/4	3,950	19	221/4
Lacrosse	103/107/1	4,249	72/66	2,136/1
Skiing-Alpine	95/107/1	846	90/107	628/1
Soccer	458/489/16	14,539	445/451	13,670/64
Softball-Fast Pitch	-	-	629/639	15,490
Swimming & Diving	218/274/7	4,696	229/287	5,468/59
Tennis	333/345/2	7,561	357/358	10,052/7
Track & Field-Outdoor	662/676	23,942	658/673	17,463
Volleyball	-	-	712/714	20,789
Wrestling	470/475/92	11,413	-	0/151

(A) The first number is the number of schools, reporting sponsorship on the Sports Participation Survey. The second number indicates schools sponsoring the sport including primary and secondary schools in cooperative programs as of May 20, 2009. The third number indicates the number of schools that had girls playing on teams consisting primarily of boys.

(B) The second number indicates the number of additional girls playing on teams consisting primarily of boys and entered in boys competition.