

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



**NEWS RELEASE**

**Attendance at High School Sporting Events Tops 500 Million**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 17, 2011) — More fans attend high school basketball and football events than the same sports at the college and professional levels combined, according to a survey conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

During the 2009–10 school year, approximately 336 million fans attended high school regular–season and playoff games in football and girls and boys basketball – more than 2½ times the 133 million spectators who attended events in those sports at the college and professional levels.

In addition, attendance at events in the top 16 high school sports from a participation standpoint was approximately 510 million during the 2009–10 school year, including 468 million during regular–season events and 42 million for state association playoff contests.

The NFHS surveyed high school athletic directors at small (up to 1,000 enrollment), medium (1,000 to 2,200) and large (more than 2,220) high schools and multiplied the average regular–season attendance (based on the schools that responded) in each sport by the number of schools in each enrollment category that sponsor the sport. A similar method was used to determine overall attendance at postseason events conducted by NFHS member state associations.

In addition to basketball and football, others sports included in the survey were baseball, cross country, field hockey, golf, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball,

swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, volleyball, water polo and wrestling. Where applicable, attendance for both boys and girls contests was included.

When combining attendance at regular-season girls and boys contests, basketball led the way with about 170 million fans, followed closely by football with 166 million. Soccer ranked third at 24 million, followed by baseball (20 million), volleyball (17 million), softball (15.8 million), wrestling (10 million), track and field (6.6 million), ice hockey (6 million), swimming and diving (4.8 million), lacrosse (4.5 million), cross country (3 million), water polo (1.8 million), tennis (1.8 million), golf (1.3 million) and field hockey (800,000).

While there are about 40 sports listed in the NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, the remaining sports not included in the attendance survey have minimal participation numbers nationally and would collectively add fewer than a million spectators annually. This is the first attempt (through the means of a survey) by the NFHS, the national leadership organization for high school athletic and performing arts activities, to determine national attendance figures at the high school level.

“This first-of-its-kind survey of attendance figures at the high school level is certainly a great sign that high school sports continue to be a big part of communities throughout our nation,” said Bob Gardner, NFHS executive director. “A ticket to a high school sporting event remains one of the best values for the entertainment dollar.”

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### **About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.6 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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