



National Collegiate Athletic Association

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[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > [Latest News](#) > [2010](#) > [December](#)

Participation climbs to 430,000 student-athletes

Despite an economic environment that has caused sport reductions at several colleges and universities, the number of student-athletes participating in NCAA sports continues to rise.

The [2009-10 NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates Report](#) shows a total of 430,301 student-athletes, almost 10,000 more than the previous year, playing NCAA championship sports. The jump continues a steady progression of about 2 percent annually since 2001-02 when the total was 363,491.

Student-athlete championship participation (all three divisions)

Year	Men	Women	Total
1981-82	167,055	64,390	231,445
1985-86	196,437	92,192	288,629
1990-91	182,836	92,473	275,309
1995-96	206,385	125,250	331,635
2000-01	214,154	155,698	369,852
2005-06	224,926	168,583	393,509
2009-10	245,875	184,426	430,301

Of the 2009-10 total, 57.1 percent are males. The male-female proportion is highest in Division II (59.2 percent male).

The number of teams also was at an all-time high, up from 17,814 in 2008-09 to 17,990 in 2009-10. Women's teams rose by 111 while men's teams increased by 65. For the third consecutive year, about 53 percent of all teams are in women's sports. Women's teams have constituted a majority since 1996-97.

The number of women's teams, in fact, has increased for the last 28 years. Men's teams, while having decreased in two of the last 10 years, were nonetheless at an all-time high in 2009-10.

NCAA schools added 154 men's and 177 women's teams in 2009-10 while dropping 84 men's and 69 women's teams, resulting in a net increase of 70 men's and 108 women's teams. Since 1988-89, men's teams have seen a net gain of 398 teams, while women's teams have increased by 2,590.

Men's sports have realized net losses in teams in nine of the last 22 years. That trend is worse when focused solely on Division I (16 of 22 years). In that span, there has been a net change in sports sponsorship of 300 fewer men's teams and 720 more women's teams in Division I.

The men's sports most affected in Division I during that time are tennis (52 fewer teams), wrestling (-50), and swimming and diving (-48). In the last seven years, though, Division I wrestling has seen a net change of minus five and swimming minus eight.

In women's sports, soccer has been the most-added sport over the long term (589 new programs since 1988-89, 222 more than golf). In recent years, golf, lacrosse and track have been popular additions for schools.

Women's outdoor track and field has more female student-athletes than any other women's sport, followed by soccer and indoor track. Football is the dominant sport for male participants, followed by baseball and track.

**Net change in
women's teams
since 1988-89 (all
three divisions)**

Soccer	+589
Golf	+367
Indoor	+227
track	
Softball	+226
Lacrosse	+219
Cross	+206
country	
Outdoor	+156
track	
Volleyball	+107
Rowing	+106
Ice hockey	+84
Basketball	+80
Swimming	+69
Bowling	+61
Water polo	+59
Tennis	+39
Field	+7
hockey	
Gymnastics	-40

**Net change in
women's teams
since 1988-89
(Division I)**

Soccer	+208
Golf	+122
Softball	+70
Indoor	+68
track	
Rowing	+66
Outdoor	+50
track	
Lacrosse	+47
Water polo	+31
Bowling	+28

Ice hockey	+25
Cross country	+14
Volleyball	+10
Basketball	+5
Swimming	+1
Tennis	-5
Field hockey	-10
Gymnastics	-15

Net change in men's teams since 1988-89 (all three divisions)

Indoor track	+117
Lacrosse	+97
Cross country	+92
Outdoor track	+80
Soccer	+78
Baseball	+68
Golf	+62
Basketball	+56
Football	+41
Volleyball	+30
Ice hockey	+3
Swimming	-12
Water polo	-22
Gymnastics	-37
Tennis	-73
Wrestling	-110

Net change in men's teams since 1988-89 (Division I)

Outdoor track	+3
Lacrosse	+2
Basketball	0

Volleyball	-2
Indoor	-3
track	
Football	-4
Ice hockey	-5
Golf	-10
Baseball	-14
Water polo	-15
Cross	-17
country	
Soccer	-17
Gymnastics	-26
Swimming	-48
Wrestling	-50
Tennis	-52

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