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Participation Numbers at the High School Level Increase in 2008-09

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For the fifth straight year, high school boys wrestling participation numbers have increased while girls' participation hit an all-time high as The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) released their 2008-09 participation numbers. High School boys' wrestling remains the sixth most popular sport with 267,378 participants.

The total number of participants in 2009 is the highest number that wrestling has seen since 1980, when participation statistics were listed at 273,326 by the NFHS. As a whole, wrestling participation at the high school level has been seeing substantial growth in numbers over the past decade.

The number of schools sponsoring boys wrestling is also at an all-time high with 10,311 schools.

In 2008-09, Arkansas became the 49th state to sanction high school wrestling. The state recorded 1,975 participants in its inaugural year. Arkansas can credit much of their growth and success to businessman Greg Hatcher, Agency Owner of the Hatcher Agency, in Little Rock, who was instrumental in getting the Arkansas Activities Association to sponsor wrestling.

Mississippi remains the lone state which does not sponsor wrestling.

Girls' wrestling also continues to grow each year. Girls' wrestling is at an all-time high with 6,025 participants. Texas and California continue to have the strongest girls wrestling presence on the high school level.

"These high school participation numbers are great for the sport of wrestling, as the overall youth numbers throughout the country are also on a steady uphill climb," said Mike Moyer, Executive Director of the National Wrestling Coaches Association. "We attribute a lot of this growth to the incredible generosity (funding and otherwise) of wrestling alumni, business professionals, and wrestling organizations/clubs throughout the country."

"It is also important to note that a growing number of wrestling coaches are dedicating more time to improving the recruitment and retention of wrestlers at all levels," said Moyer. "While growing the overall participation numbers across America is very important (i.e. increasing the number of teams), we must also make sure we are growing the average roster size of each individual team. What is important to remember with these growing numbers is the importance of ongoing coaching education as it relates to the retention of the student-athlete once they start participating in the sport."

For more information on wrestling participation numbers since 1971 please visit the links below:

- [Boys Participation \(PDF\)](#)
- [Boys Participation State by State \(PDF\)](#)
- [Girls Participation \(PDF\)](#)

For more information on the NFHS participation numbers you can visit the [NFHS website](#).

Tammy Tedesco

[girls wrestling](#) [boys wrestling](#) [Wrestling](#) [NFHS](#)



National Federation of State
High School Associations



