



**For Immediate Release
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PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETIC PROGRAMS INCREASES FOR FIFTH STRAIGHT YEAR

(Franklin – MA) Athletic participation by high school students at MIAA member schools increased for the fifth consecutive year, reaching an all-time high during the 2004-2005 school year. Figures collected from 361 member schools indicate that 205,181 student athletes participated on high school teams. (The methodology of the survey does not account for students who play more than one sport). This figure represents an athletic participation increase of 8,494 students from the previous year. Student enrollment during this same time frame in grades 9-12 at member schools increased by only 5,971 students. Seventeen boys' sports and sixteen girls' sports were included in this survey. The boys' participation number this year increased by 5,572 and girls' participation by 2,922 over last year.

Football continued to have the highest number of participants with 20,909 players, up 660 student-athletes from the previous year. Once again soccer was the most popular girls' sport with 12,047 participants. However, participation in girls' outdoor track jumped to the second most popular female sport, increasing participation by 672 athletes. Moving past Boys' lacrosse as the largest growing boys' sport is baseball, with an increase of 1,104 participants. Girls' lacrosse recorded another considerable increase during the 2004-2005 school year jumping from 4,449 participants to 5,230 participants, a gain of 781 new female lacrosse players.

Additional information collected from MIAA Member Schools indicates that over the past four years, 837 student-athletes played or planned to play a Division 1 college sport. This represents a mere 0.1% per year, or only one in every 1,000 MIAA student-athletes. Only 54 student-athletes over the past four years signed a professional contract, representing a stingy .007% per year.