FOOTBALL AGAIN TOP HIGH SCHOOL SPORT

For the eighth year in a row, 11-man football amassed more than 1,000,000 participants to maintain the top spot as America's most popular high school sport program, according to the most recent statistics released by the National Federation of State High School Associations. The number of participants in the 2005-06 season jumped from last year's total, with 1,071,775 boys playing 11-man football – an increase of over 26,000.

By adding in 6-man, 8-man and 9-man football, the sport's total participation among high school boys is 1,097,515. Boys' basketball came in a distant second with 546,335 participants.

Football is also the fastest-growing of the 10 most popular boys high school sports, with a gain of 26,231 players.

MOST POPULAR BOYS HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS PROGRAMS

SPORT	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	GROWTH FROM 2005-06
1. Football (11-man)	1,071,775	26,231
2. Basketball	546,335	838
3. Track and Field (outdoor)	533,985	11,902
4. Baseball	470,671	10,754
5. Soccer	358,935	4,348

Boys aren't the only ones having all the fun, though. Increasingly, girls are also getting in on the action, with seven high schools adding 11-player teams from the previous year. The 2005-06 season featured 257 girls football teams across the nation.

The range of high schools producing talented athletes can be seen from April's NFL Draft. A total of 240 high schools had a role in grooming the 255 players selected to join the league.

The talent came from far and wide as nine different states were represented in the top 10 picks of the draft.

Three players each were selected from Evangel Academy High School of Shreveport, Louisiana and Miami Norland High School in Miami, Florida. Eleven other schools sent two players each to the NFL. The breakdown:

HIGH SCHOOLS WITH MULTIPLE PLAYERS DRAFTED IN 2007

HIGH SCHOOL	TOTAL	PLAYERS (NFL TEAM/ROUND)
Evangel Academy (Shreveport, LA)	3	Jonathan Wade (St. Louis/3); Chase Pittman (Cleveland/7); Keyunta Dawson (Indianapolis/7)
Miami Norland (Miami, FL)	3	Dwayne Bowe (Kansas City/1); Kareem Brown (New England/4); Antwan Barnes (Baltimore/4)
Billy Ryan High School (Denton, TX)	2	Jarvis Moss (Denver/1), Brian Smith (Jacksonville/4)
Crenshaw (Los Angeles, CA)	2	Brandon Mebane (Seattle/3); Daymeion Hughes (Indianapolis/3)
Dacula (Dacula, GA)	2	Kenny Irons (Cincinnati/2); David Irons (Atlanta/6)
Dematha Catholic (Hyattsville, MD)	2	Josh Wilson (Seattle/2); Jacob Bender (New York Jets/6)
Dublin Coffman (Dublin, OH)	2	Brady Quinn (Cleveland/1); Nedu Ndukwe (Cincinnati/7)
Glenville (Cleveland, OH)	2	Ted Ginn, Jr. (Miami/1); Troy Smith (Baltimore/5)
James S. Rickards (Tallahassee, FL)	2	Kolby Smith (Kansas City/5); William Gay (Pittsburgh/5)
John Tyler (Tyler, TX)	2	Aaron Ross (New York Giants/1); Tim Crowder (Denver/2)
Northern Durham (Durham, NC)	2	A.J. Davis (Detroit/4); Josh Gattis (Jacksonville/5)
Palm Bay (Melbourne, FL)	2	Reggie Nelson (Jacksonville/1); Joe Cohen (San Francisco/4)
S R Butler (Huntsville, AL)	2	Kenneth Darby (Tampa Bay/6); Ramzee Robinson (Detroit/7)
Wilson (Florence, SC)	2	Lawrence Timmons (Pittsburgh/1); Justin Durant (Jacksonville/2)