

NSGA Sports Participation Methodology: 2026 Edition

A. Sampling

The “Sports Participation in the United States” research was conducted by Ipsos using an online panel maintained by Ipsos. The panel is profiled on a number of characteristics including age, gender, zip/postal code, household size and composition, education and household income, enabling balanced sample to be achieved. As a note, 2010 was the first year that an online survey methodology was used for collecting data on sports participation. Prior to 2010, this annual study was conducted using a mailback survey methodology. Please keep this in mind when making direct comparisons with data published prior to 2010.

B. Questionnaire

In January 2026, sample members of the Ipsos panel were invited to complete the sports participation survey online. Respondents were asked to indicate the age and gender of all household members age seven and older, and provide the number of days of participation for each sport / activity in 2025 for up to 4 household members including themselves. In order to reduce a bias effect that is possible from the order in which the sports were listed, the sports were presented in a randomized order.

C. Returns

The study results are based on approximately 25,000 individuals who are ages 7 and older. In order to ensure returns were representative of the U.S., the data was weighted to represent the demographic composition of the U.S. based on the 2024 census for the following characteristics: census region, household income, age and gender. The returns were then projected to 311,928,000 – the most recent projection for the U.S. population age 7 and older at the time of the study.

D. Participants

A participant is defined as an individual seven years of age or older who participates in a sport / activity at least two days per year for all sports / activities except bicycle riding, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, running/jogging, swimming, weightlifting, and work out at club/gym/fitness studio. For these fitness activities, participation is defined as six days or more during the year. Note that this study also reports separately the number of individuals who participated "1 Day Only" or "1-5 Days Only" for each sport / activity. These are not included in "Total Participants" for each sport / activity since they are not "participants" as defined above.

The definition of "Frequent", "Occasional" and "Infrequent" participants varies for each sport / activity and is indicated in the report. Generally, these categories are defined as the top 25%, the middle 50% and the lower 25% of participants. For sports / activities where the incidence of participation is low, participants may be divided into "Frequent" and "Occasional" only.