

Connecting Sports Participation with Household Income



Research performed by NSGA earlier this year identified that the cost to participate in sports and recreational activities is one of the key barriers to greater participation. Certain sports/activities require more financial resources than others and tend to skew toward upper income households. Through the use of NSGA's annual sports participation study, an analysis of participation by annual household income was executed to paint a clearer picture of which sports/activities

typically are participated in by higher vs. lower income households.

The first graph below identifies the 10 sports/activities that are participated in by households with the highest incomes. Of the 51 sports/activities that NSGA tracks, Alpine Skiing leads the list with the median household income of participants being \$114,000 per year. Golf is No. 2 with the median household income of \$85,000. Rounding out the top 5 are Ice Hockey (\$82,000), Scuba Diving (\$81,000), and Motor/Power Boating (\$77,000). Ranking Nos. 6-10 are represented by a variety of segments including Individual Sports (Tennis), Fitness (Work Out at Club), Open Water (Water Skiing, Kayaking), and Team Sports (Lacrosse). All sports/activities in the top 10 have participants with median household incomes of at least \$72,000. The median household income among participants of many of these sports/activities continues to increase.

The second graph below lists the sports/activities that are participated in by households with the lowest incomes. No sport/activity has a median household income level below \$50,000. Wrestling resides on that threshold at \$50,000, with Target Shooting (Airgun), Tackle Football, and Dart Throwing all under \$55,000. Billiards/Pool, Touch Football, Paintball Games, Hunting with Firearms, Skateboarding, and Fresh Water Fishing round out the bottom 10 with median household incomes between \$55,000 and \$57,000.

As a point of comparison, the average median income in the US is approximately \$51,000. Comparing incomes across the 51 sports/activities that NSGA tracks, the median income averages out to approximately \$66,000. The industry challenge remains to find methods to reduce financial barriers to participation, with specific focus toward the sports/activities that skew towards the highest incomes.

10 Sports/Activities with Highest Median Household Incomes
In Thousands



10 Sports/Activities with Lowest Median Household Incomes
In Thousands



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