



CONVENTION



2024

Thriving or Just Surviving? NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Post-Pandemic



CONVENTION



2024

A blue and white pennant with the NCAA logo is shown in the foreground, slightly out of focus. The background is a blurred crowd of people at a sporting event, with many wearing red and white clothing. A semi-transparent dark blue banner is overlaid at the bottom of the image.

Findings from the 2023 NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study

NCAA Convention - January 2024



RESEARCH

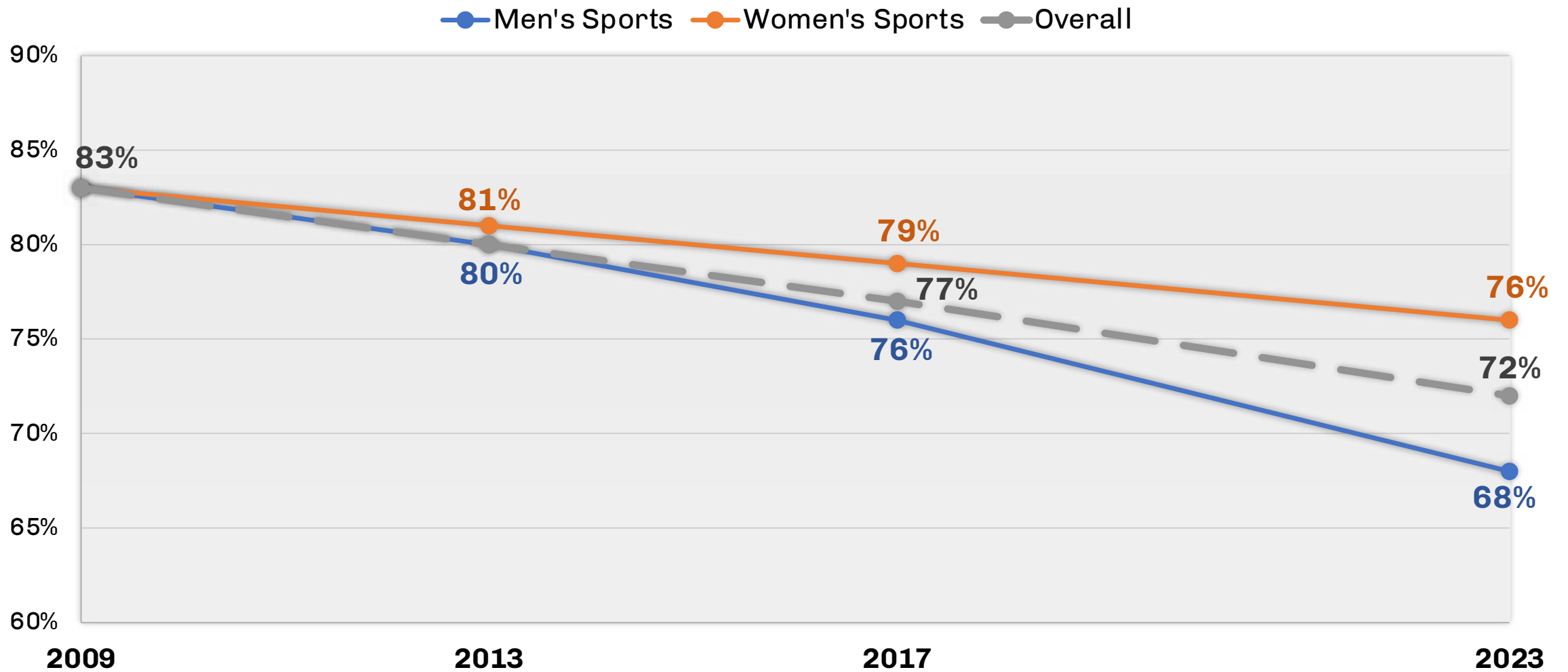
Background

- NCAA Research has historically partnered with FARs to gain insight into student-athlete health and well-being through a range of national surveys. The tenth iteration of the NCAA Substance Use Study was planned for 2021, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the study was postponed.
- Coming out of the pandemic, the Sport Science Institute and NCAA Research identified the need to conduct a comprehensive student-athlete health and wellness study. To accommodate this survey in the NCAA-FAR rotation, key items from the Substance Use Study were subsumed within this instrument.
- Survey was conducted on campuses by FARs during the 2022-23 academic year. About 23,000 student-athletes provided survey responses.

Student-Athlete Substance Use

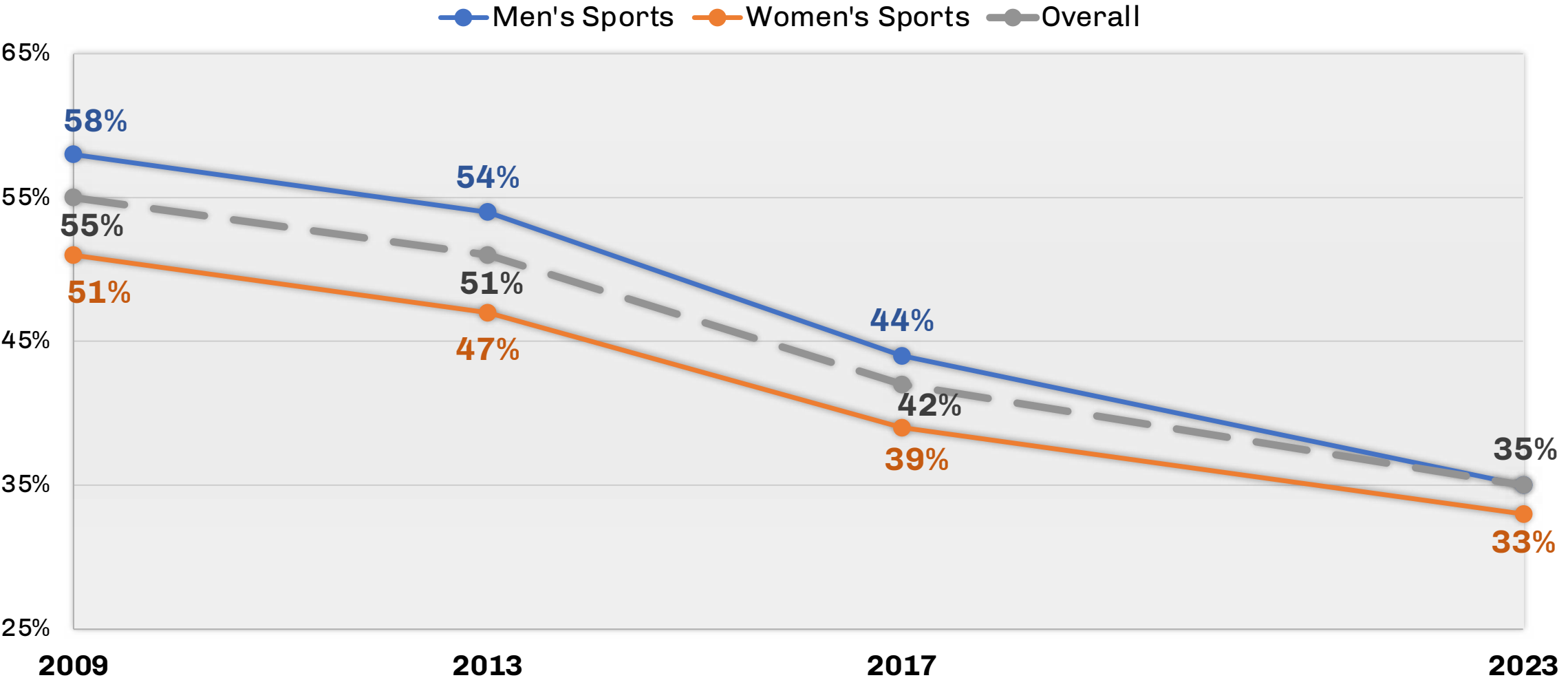
Alcohol Use by Sport Gender

(Within the Last Year)



Sources: NCAA Student-Athlete Substance Use Studies (2009, 2013, 2017) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Binge Drinking by Sport Gender



Note: Binge drinking is defined as women having four or more drinks and men having five or more drinks in one sitting.
Sources: NCAA Student-Athlete Substance Use Studies (2009, 2013, 2017) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).



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Comparative Data, Student-Athletes vs. Nonathletes

(Use within the Last Year)

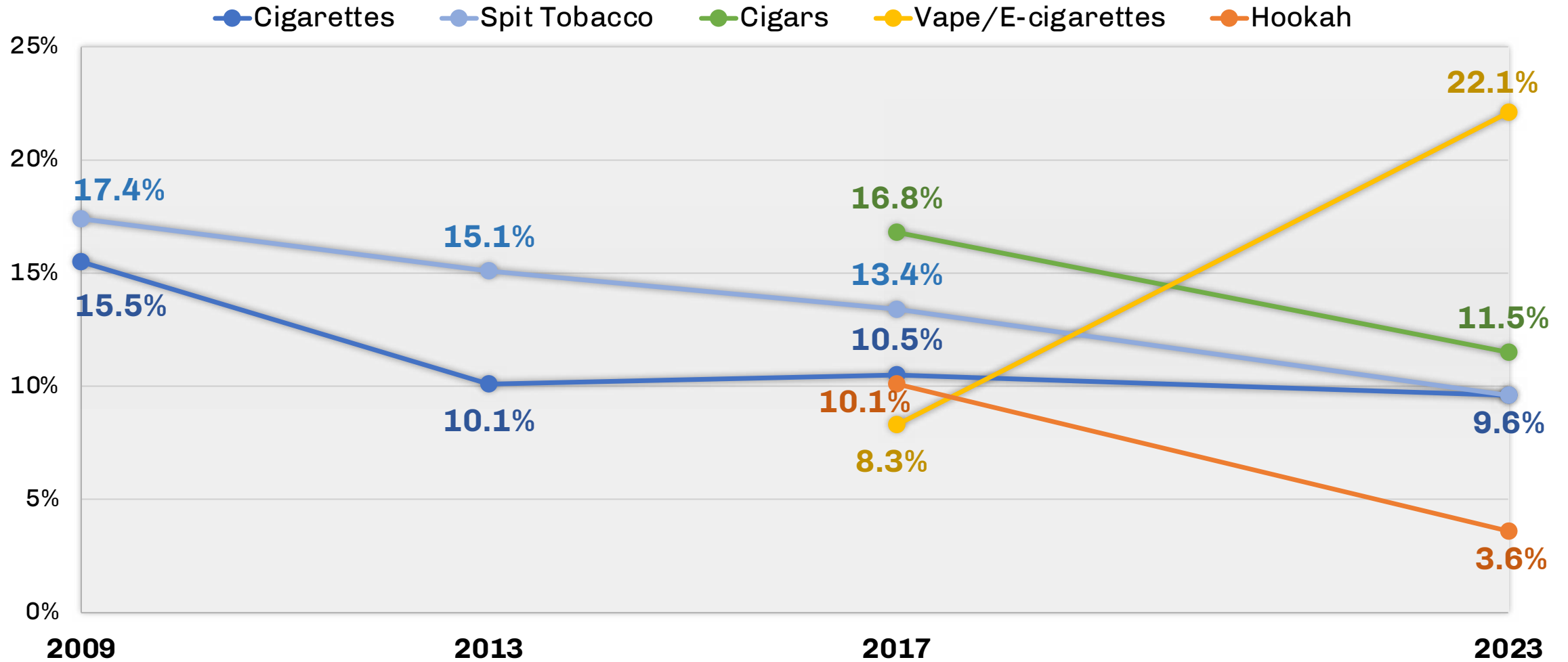
	NCAA ¹ [2022-23]	ACHA-NCHA ² [2023]	MTF ³ [2022]
Alcohol	71.7%	72.2%	80.5%
Marijuana	25.9%	38.4%	40.9%
Vaping nicotine/e-cigarettes	22.1%	-	26.4%
Cigarettes	9.6%	-	15.6%
Amphetamines	0.8%	-	4.8%
Cocaine	1.6%	-	3.3%
Ecstasy/Molly	0.7%	-	1.7%
LSD	0.9%	-	1.4%

¹Representative sample of 23,272 NCAA student-athletes. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

²55,292 undergraduate students from 125 US Postsecondary Institutions. Source: American College Health Association. American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment III: Undergraduate Student Reference Group Data Report Spring 2023. Silver Spring, MD: American College Health Association; 2023. Retrieved from: [Spring 2023 UG Reference Group Data Report \(acha.org\)](https://www.acha.org/documents/ncha/spring2023-ug-reference-group-data-report)

³Representative sample of 800-1,500 full-time college students (ages 19 to 22) at a 2-year or 4-year college or university annually. Source: Patrick, M. E., Miech, R. A., Johnston, L. D., & O'Malley, P. M. (2023). Monitoring the Future Panel Study annual report: National data on substance use among adults ages 19 to 60, 1976-2022. Monitoring the Future Monograph Series. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan. Retrieved from: [mtfpanel2023.pdf \(monitoringthefuture.org\)](https://www.monitoringthefuture.org/mtfpanel2023.pdf).

Tobacco/Nicotine Use (Within the Last Year)



Note: Studies prior to 2017 only asked about cigarette and spit tobacco use. In 2023, the survey changed “e-cigarettes” to “vape/e-cigarettes.” Sources: NCAA Student-Athlete Substance Use Studies (2009, 2013, 2017) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).



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Comparative Data, Student-Athletes vs. Nonathletes

(Use within the Last Year)

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Patterns of Spit Tobacco Use in the Last Year by Sport (Men's Sports)

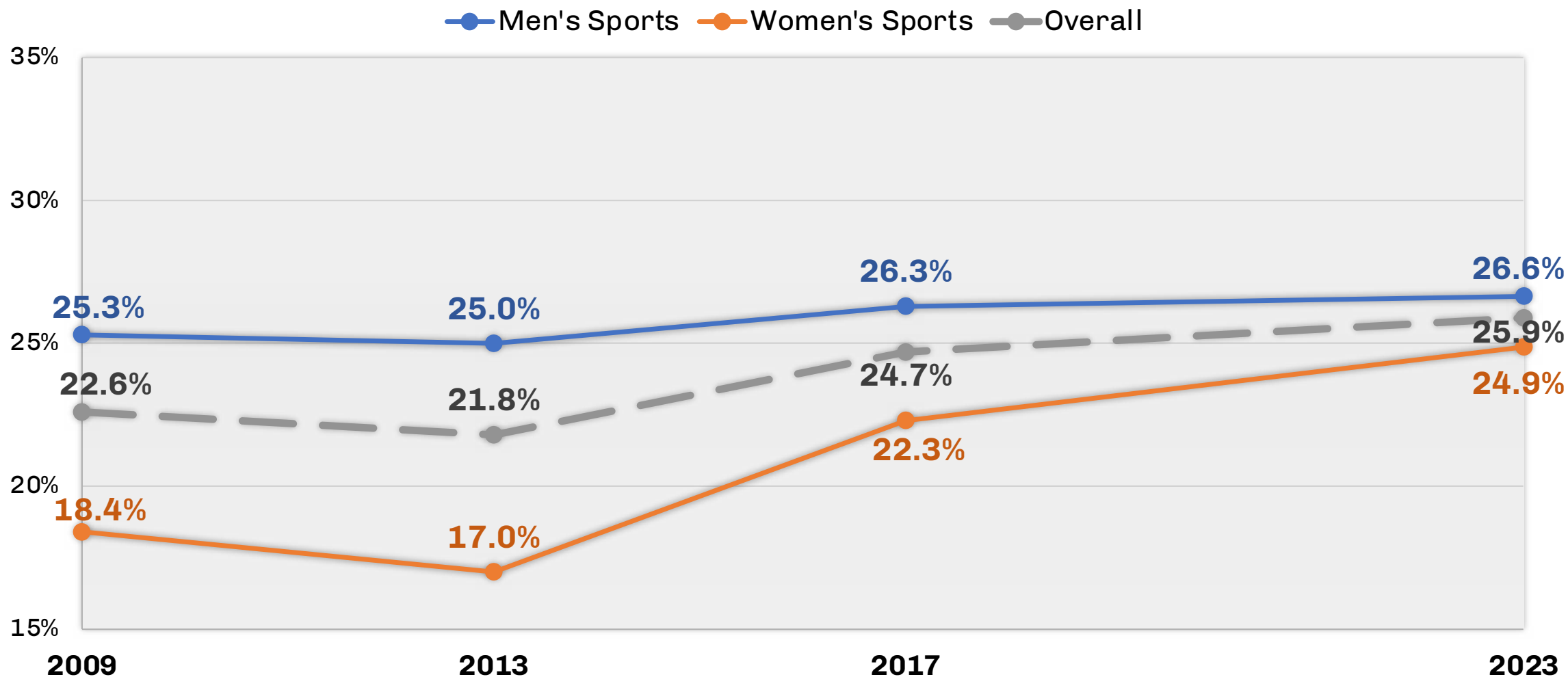
	2009	2013	2017	2023
Ice Hockey	54%	50%	46%	47%
Baseball	52%	48%	44%	28%
Lacrosse	41%	40%	35%	25%
Wrestling	48%	37%	33%	20%
Golf	31%	30%	23%	19%
Football	28%	23%	22%	15%
Swim & Dive	13%	15%	12%	12%
Soccer	16%	14%	12%	8%
Tennis	11%	10%	8%	8%
Basketball	11%	9%	8%	5%
Track & Field	9%	9%	9%	4%

 Green indicates a decrease of 5 percentage points or more from 2017.

Note: Examples of spit tobacco include dip, chew or pouch. Sources: NCAA Student-Athlete Substance Use Studies (2009, 2013, 2017) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Marijuana Use by Sport Gender

(Inhaled or Ingested Within the Last Year)



Note: Marijuana use includes those who reported inhaling (e.g., smoke, vape, dab) or ingesting (e.g., edibles, oils, tinctures) “marijuana or other cannabis products.” The use of cannabis applied to skin (e.g., cannabis-infused lotions) or synthetic marijuana (e.g., Delta 8, K2, Spice) are not included in these rates. Sources: NCAA Student-Athlete Substance Use Studies (2009, 2013, 2017) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Comparative Data, Student-Athletes vs. Nonathletes

(Use within the Last Year)

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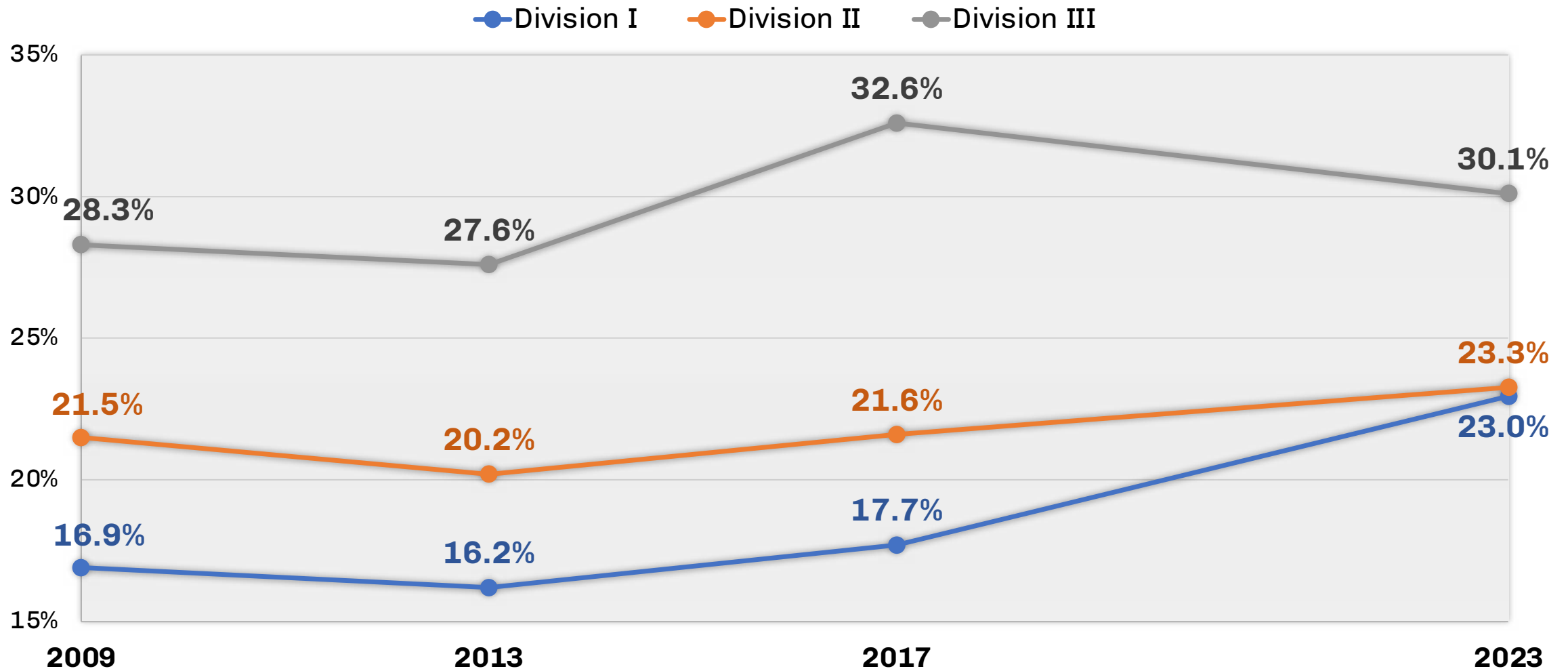
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Marijuana Use by Division

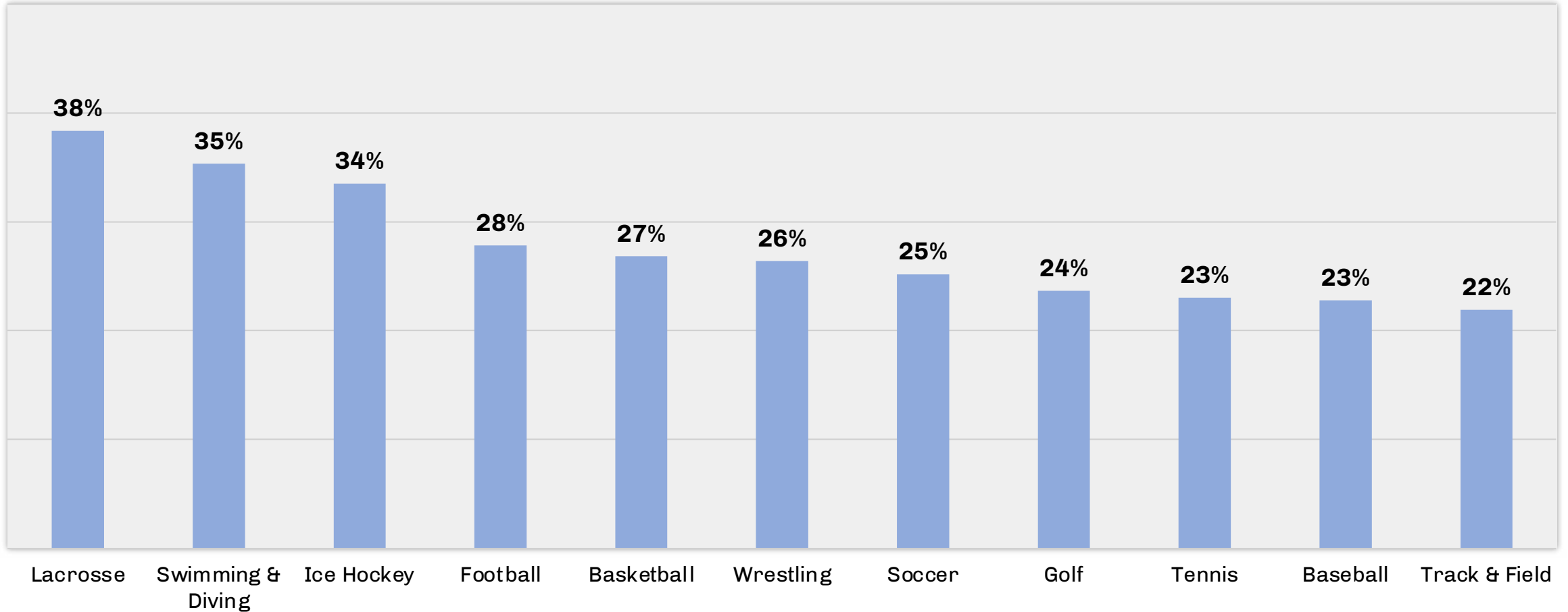
(Inhaled or Ingested Within the Last Year)



Note: Marijuana use includes those who reported inhaling (e.g., smoke, vape, dab) or ingesting (e.g., edibles, oils, tinctures) “marijuana or other cannabis products.” The use of cannabis applied to skin (e.g., cannabis-infused lotions) or synthetic marijuana (e.g., Delta 8, K2, Spice) are not included in these rates. Sources: NCAA Student-Athlete Substance Use Studies (2009, 2013, 2017) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Marijuana Use by Sport

(Men's Sports, Inhaled or Ingested Within the Last Year)



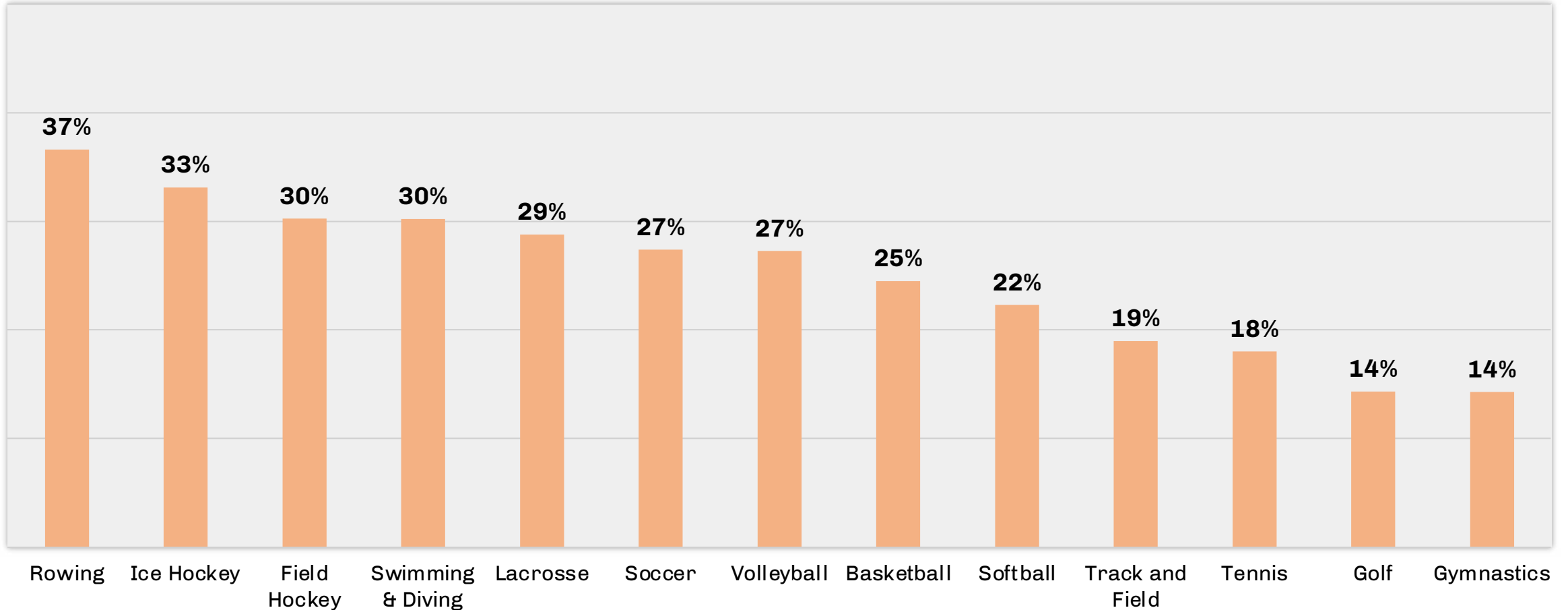
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Marijuana Use by Sport

(Women's Sports, Inhaled or Ingested Within the Last Year)

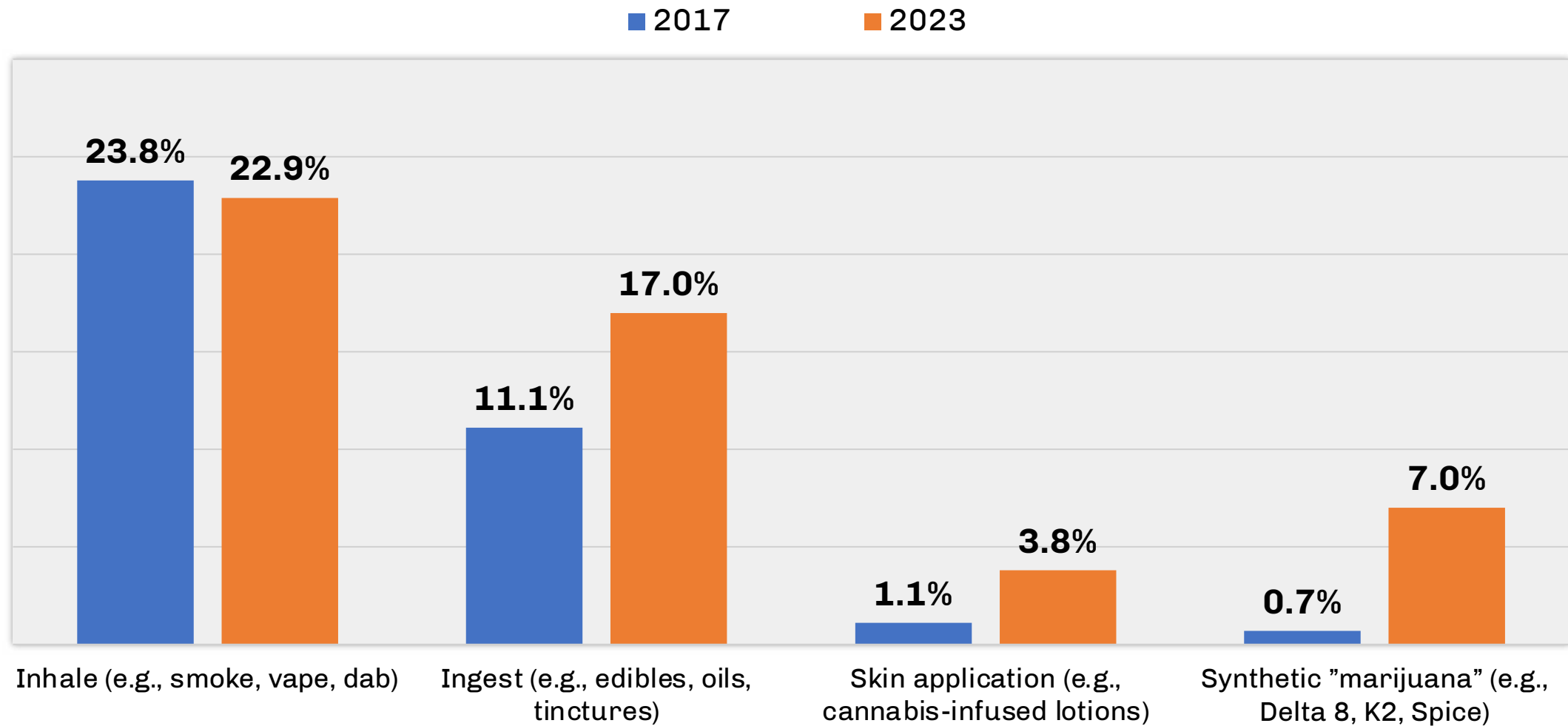


Note: Marijuana use includes those who reported inhaling (e.g., smoke, vape, dab) or ingesting (e.g., edibles, oils, tinctures) “marijuana or other cannabis products.” The use of cannabis applied to skin (e.g., cannabis-infused lotions) or synthetic “marijuana” (e.g., Delta 8, K2, Spice) are not included in these rates. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).



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Marijuana/Cannabis Use by Method (Within Last Year)



Sources: NCAA Student-Athlete Substance Use Study (2017) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

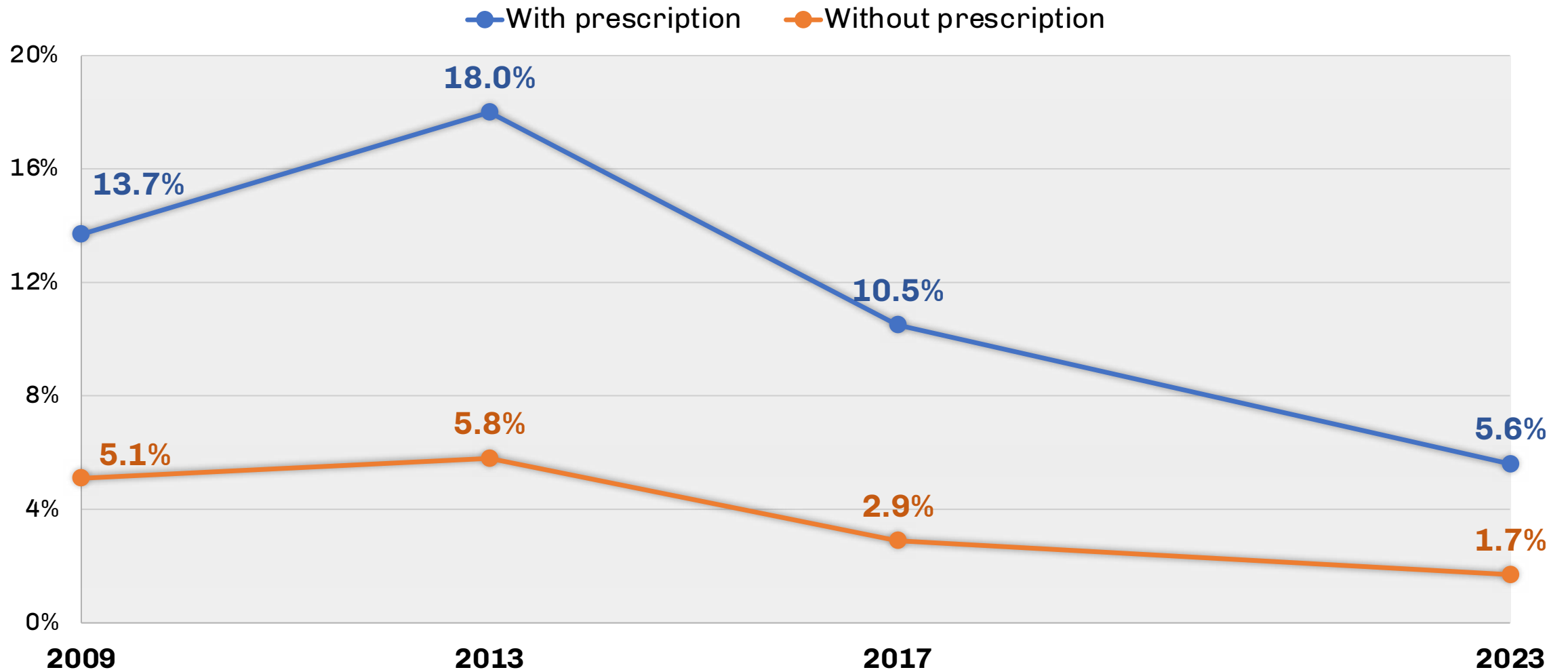
Marijuana Use by College State Legal Status

(Within Last Year)

Method	Legal for personal and medical use	Legal for medical use	Not legal	I don't know
Marijuana use (Combined inhale/ingest)	43%	35%	28%	16%
Inhale (Smoke, vape, dab)	38%	33%	26%	13%
Ingest (Edibles, oils, tinctures)	31%	24%	18%	9%

Note: The sample included 4,640 student-athletes (21%) attending a college in a state where marijuana was legal for personal (recreational) and medical use, 2,127 (10%) in a state with legal medical use, 4,934 (22%) in a state where marijuana is not legal and 10,655 (48%) were not aware of their marijuana state laws. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Narcotic Pain Medication Use (Within Last Year)



Note: Examples of narcotic pain medication include Vicodin, Oxycontin, Percocet, Dilaudid, Fentanyl, Morphine and Tylenol with Codeine. Sources: NCAA Student-Athlete Substance Use Studies (2009, 2013, 2017) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Change in Narcotic Pain Medication Use by Sport, 2017 to 2023

(Men's Sports, Within Last Year)

	2017	2023
Lacrosse	17%	5%
Ice Hockey	13%	3%
Wrestling	12%	5%
Football	11%	5%
Golf	9%	3%
Baseball	9%	4%
Swimming & Diving	8%	6%
Track & Field	8%	3%
Soccer	8%	4%
Basketball	7%	4%
Tennis	7%	4%

Note: Data includes any reported narcotic pain medication use (with or without prescription). Examples of narcotic pain medication include Vicodin, Oxycontin, Percocet, Dilaudid, Fentanyl, Morphine and Tylenol with Codeine. Source: NCAA Substance Use Study, 2017; NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study, 2023.



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Change in Narcotic Pain Medication Use by Sport, 2017 to 2023

(Women's Sports, Within Last Year)

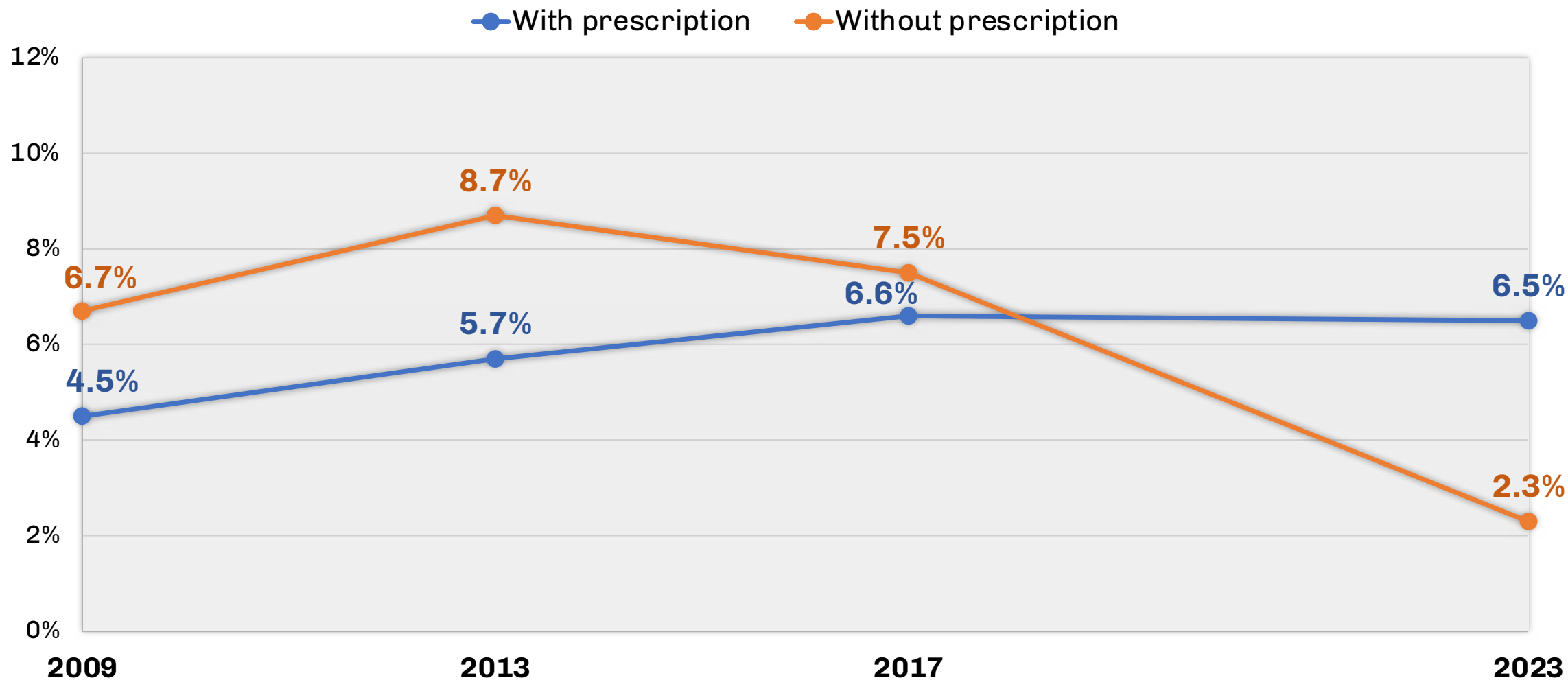
	2017	2023
Gymnastics	18%	8%
Softball	13%	8%
Ice Hockey	13%	4%
Lacrosse	12%	6%
Rowing	11%	4%
Swimming & Diving	11%	7%
Volleyball	11%	6%
Soccer	11%	7%
Field Hockey	11%	5%
Golf	10%	5%
Basketball	10%	6%
Tennis	10%	5%
Track & Field	7%	3%

Note: Data includes any reported narcotic pain medication use (with or without prescription). Examples of narcotic pain medication include Vicodin, Oxycontin, Percocet, Dilaudid, Fentanyl, Morphine and Tylenol with Codeine. Source: NCAA Substance Use Study, 2017; NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study, 2023.



RESEARCH

ADHD Stimulant Use (Within Last Year)



Note: Examples of ADHD stimulants include Adderall, Ritalin, Concerta and Vyvanse. Sources: NCAA Student-Athlete Substance Use Studies (2009, 2013, 2017) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Mental Health

Mental Health Concerns

(Percentage of Men's Sports Participants Who Endorsed “Constantly” or “Most Every Day”)

	COVID-19 Well-Being Studies			Health and Wellness Study
	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	2022-23
Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do	31%	27%	25%	17%
Experienced sleep difficulties	31%	18%	19%	17%
Felt mentally exhausted	26%	21%	22%	16%
Felt overwhelming anxiety	14%	11%	12%	9%
Felt very lonely	22%	12%	11%	8%
Felt sad	17%	11%	11%	7%
Felt overwhelming anger	11%	6%	6%	6%
Felt a sense of loss	21%	8%	8%	5%
Felt things were hopeless	11%	10%	6%	4%
Felt so depressed it was difficult to function	7%	5%	6%	3%

Green indicates a decrease of 5 percentage points or more from Fall 2021

Note: The spring 2020 survey asked, “As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, have you...,” and was in the field approximately a month after the pandemic led to the cancelation of winter and spring championships (Mar. 12, 2020) and the closure of most campuses. The fall 2020/2021 and 2023 surveys asked, “Within the last month, have you...” Spring 2020 survey N=15,148 men’s sports participants; Fall 2020 survey N=8,799; Fall 2021 survey N = 3,137; 2023 survey N=14,001. Sources: [NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being Studies](#) (2020 and 2021) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).



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Mental Health Concerns

(Percentage of Women's Sports Participants Who Endorsed “Constantly” or “Most Every Day”)

	COVID-19 Well-Being Studies			Health and Wellness Study
	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	2022-23
Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do	50%	51%	47%	44%
Experienced sleep difficulties	42%	28%	28%	28%
Felt mentally exhausted	39%	39%	38%	35%
Felt overwhelming anxiety	27%	29%	29%	29%
Felt very lonely	33%	21%	16%	13%
Felt sad	31%	22%	19%	17%
Felt overwhelming anger	11%	8%	8%	7%
Felt a sense of loss	31%	13%	11%	8%
Felt things were hopeless	16%	16%	10%	8%
Felt so depressed it was difficult to function	9%	9%	9%	7%

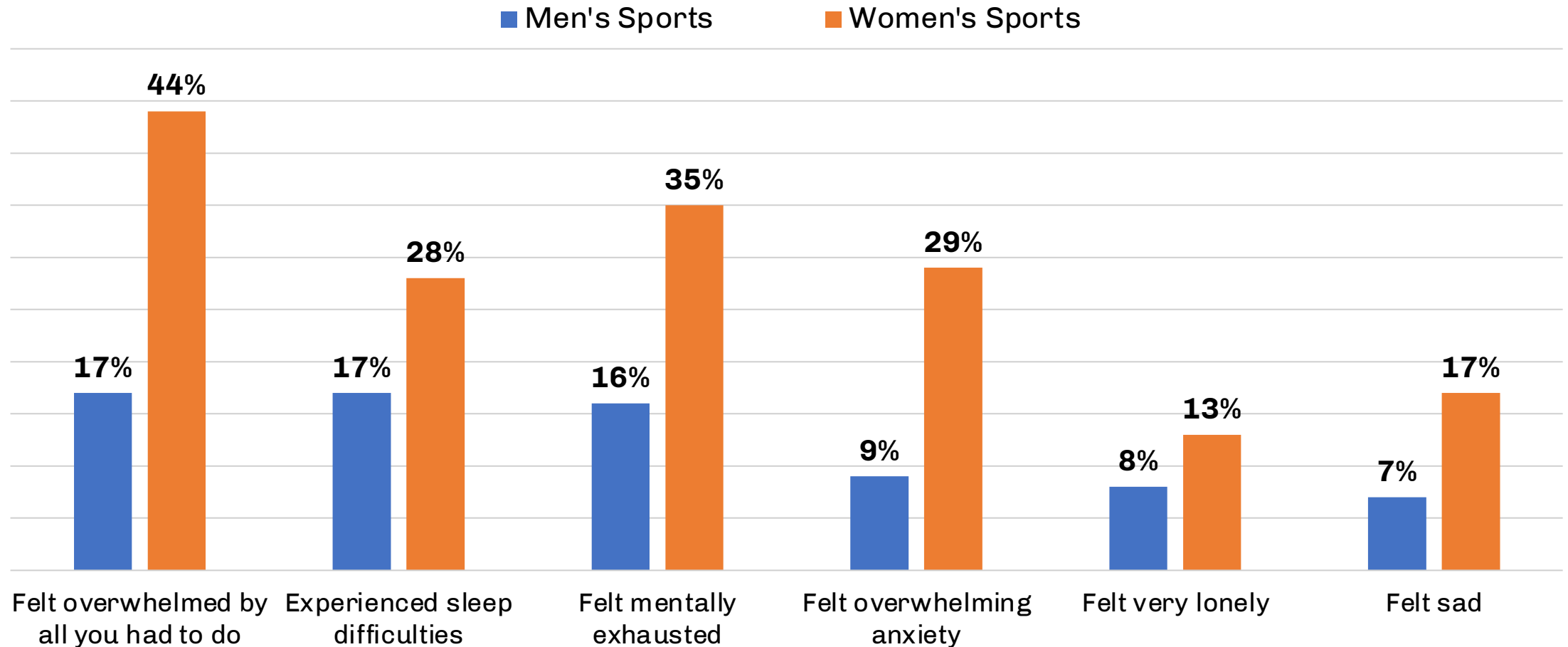
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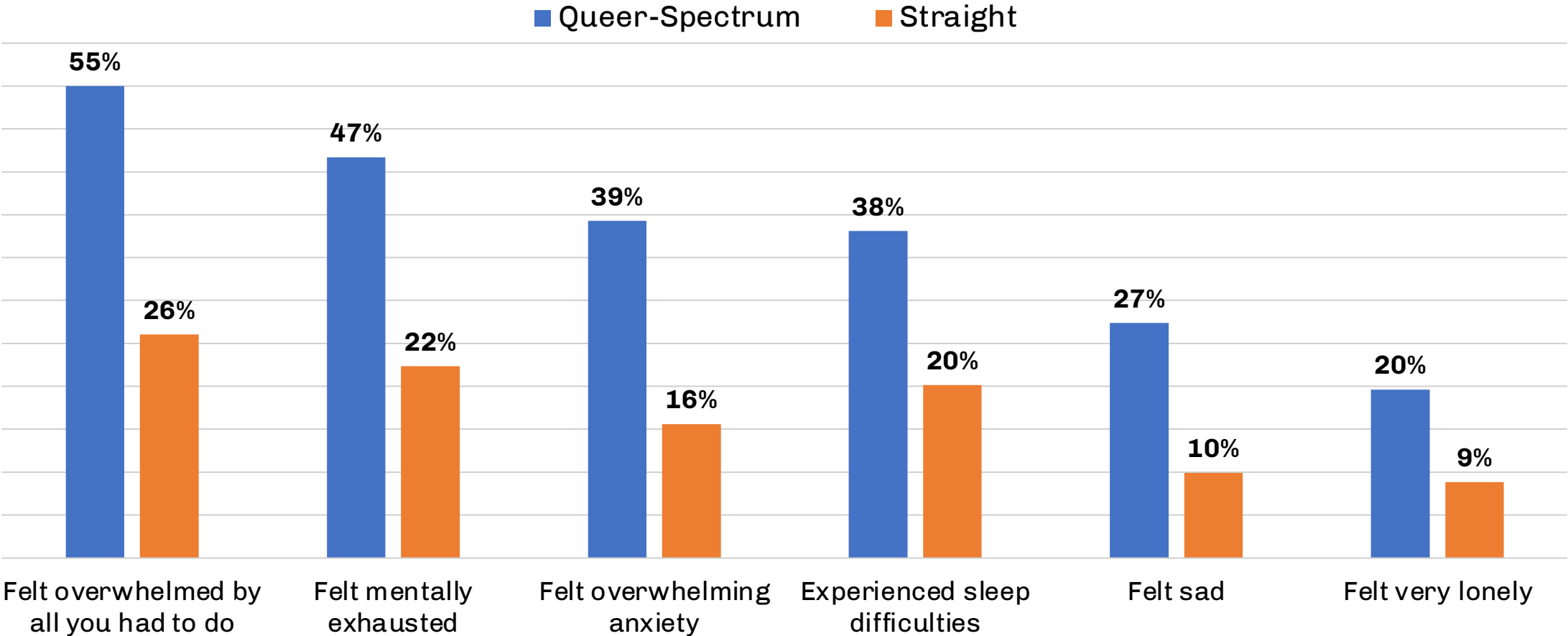
Mental Health Concerns During 2022-23 Academic Year

(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Constantly” or “Most Every Day”)



Mental Health Concerns During 2022-23 Academic Year

(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Constantly” or “Most Every Day” by Sexual Orientation)

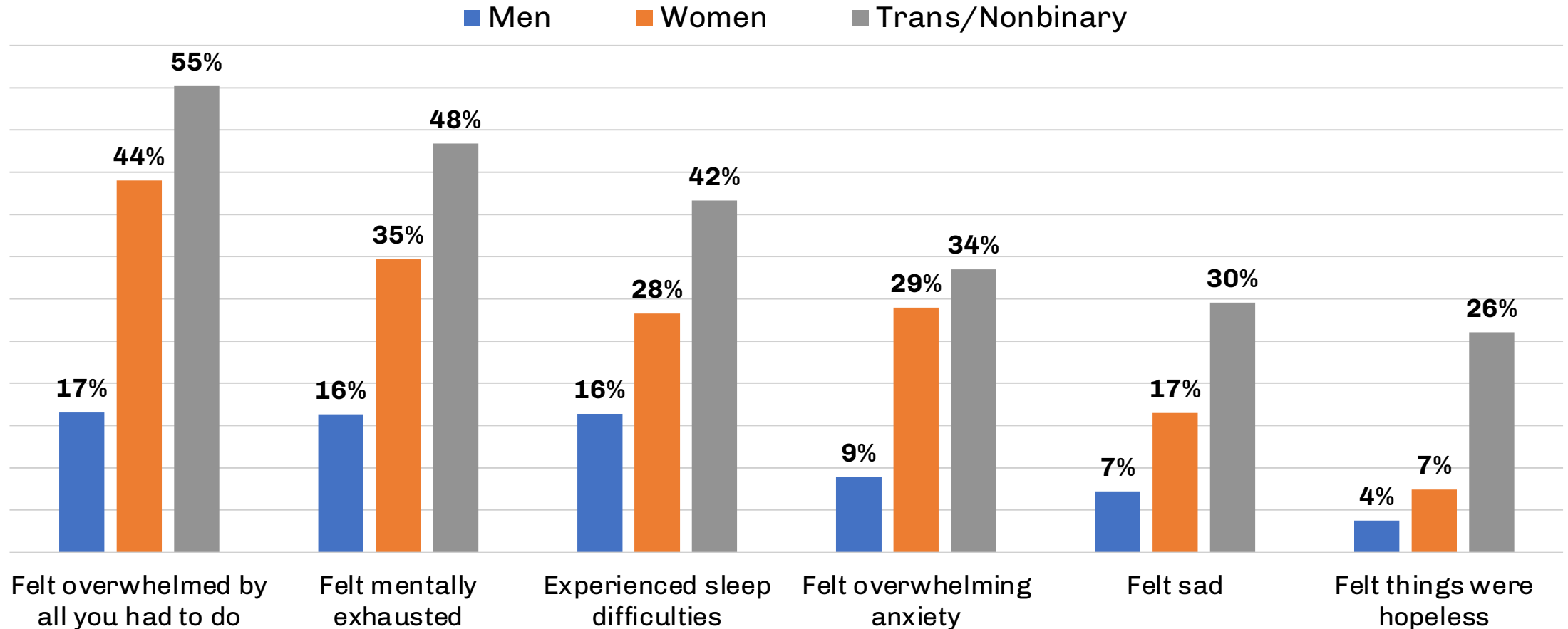


Note: Queer-spectrum includes those self-identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer, questioning/unsure, another sexual identity or multiple sexual identities. Queer-spectrum participants represented 7% of the sample (N=1,495). Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).



Mental Health Concerns During 2022-23 Academic Year

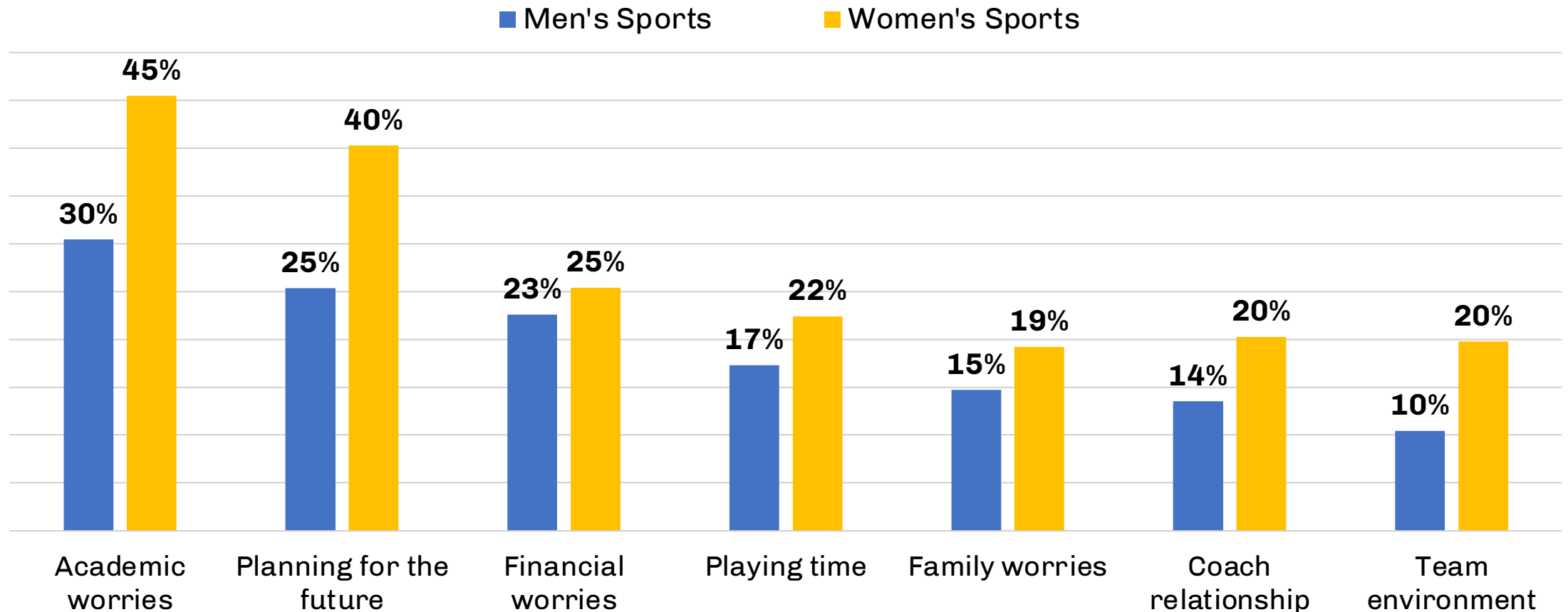
(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Constantly” or “Most Every Day” by Gender Identity)



Note: Nonbinary includes those self-identifying as genderqueer, nonbinary, transgender, another gender identity or multiple gender identities. Nonbinary participants represented <1% of the sample (N=148). Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Factors Negatively Impacting Student-Athlete Mental Health in the Month Before the Survey

(Percentage of Participants Who Responded “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)



Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. The survey asked, “How much do you agree or disagree that the following have negatively impacted your mental health within the last month?” Other factors endorsed at rates ranging from 3-4% included COVID-19 health concerns and political disagreements with family/friends. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).



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Sleep

In the past 7 days, how often did you get enough sleep that you felt rested when you woke up in the morning?

(Overall)

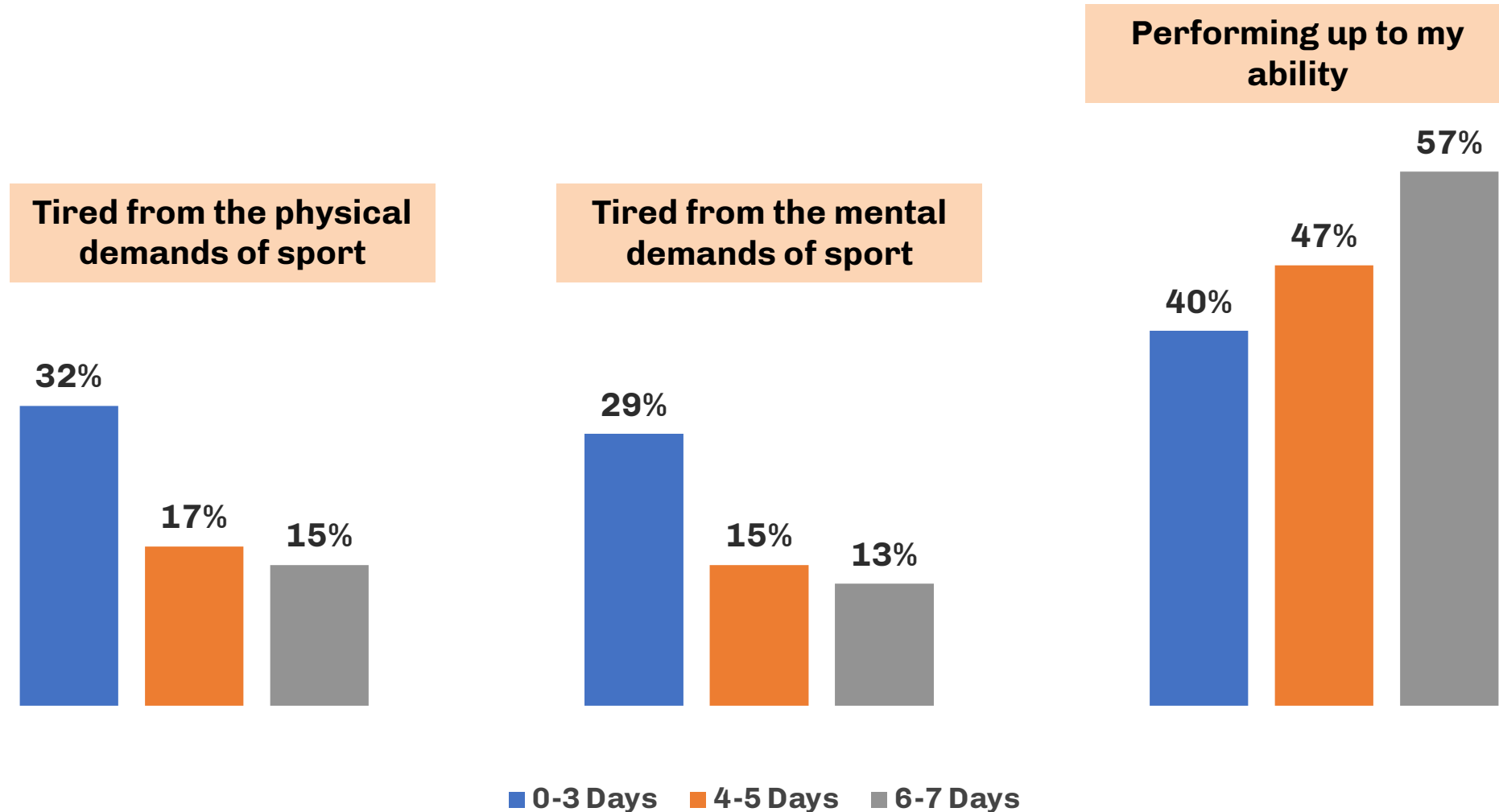
	Overall	Men's Sports	Women's Sports
0-3 Days	47%	42%	54%
4-5 Days	33%	33%	32%
6-7 Days	20%	25%	14%



Green indicates a decrease of 5 percentage points or more from GOALS 2019.

Yellow indicates an increase of 5 percentage points or more from GOALS 2019.

Student-Athlete Physical/Mental Functioning vs. Days of Restful Sleep in the Past Week



Note: Endorsement of top two scale points (Strongly Agree, Agree) on a 6-point scale. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Percent Reporting 4+ Days of Poor Sleep Behavior in Last Week (Overall)

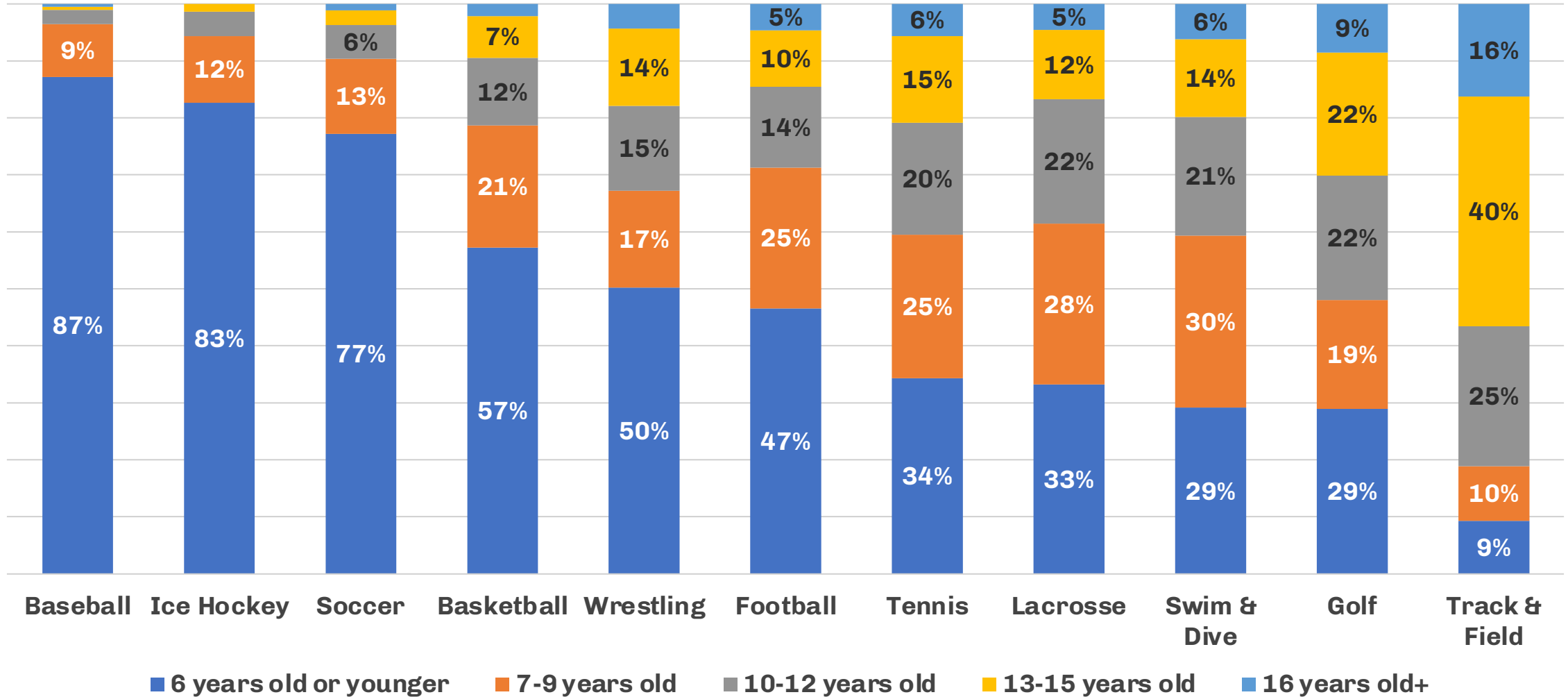
	Men's Sports	Women's Sports
Felt tired, dragged out or sleepy during day	41%	61%
Had to go to bed due to exhaustion	23%	32%
Hard time falling asleep	19%	25%
Awakened too early	17%	20%
Fell asleep at an inappropriate time/place	10%	8%

Note: Participants were asked, "In the past 7 days, how often have you..." Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Age of Specialization and Injury

Age At Which Began Playing Sport

(Men's Sports Athletes, Overall)

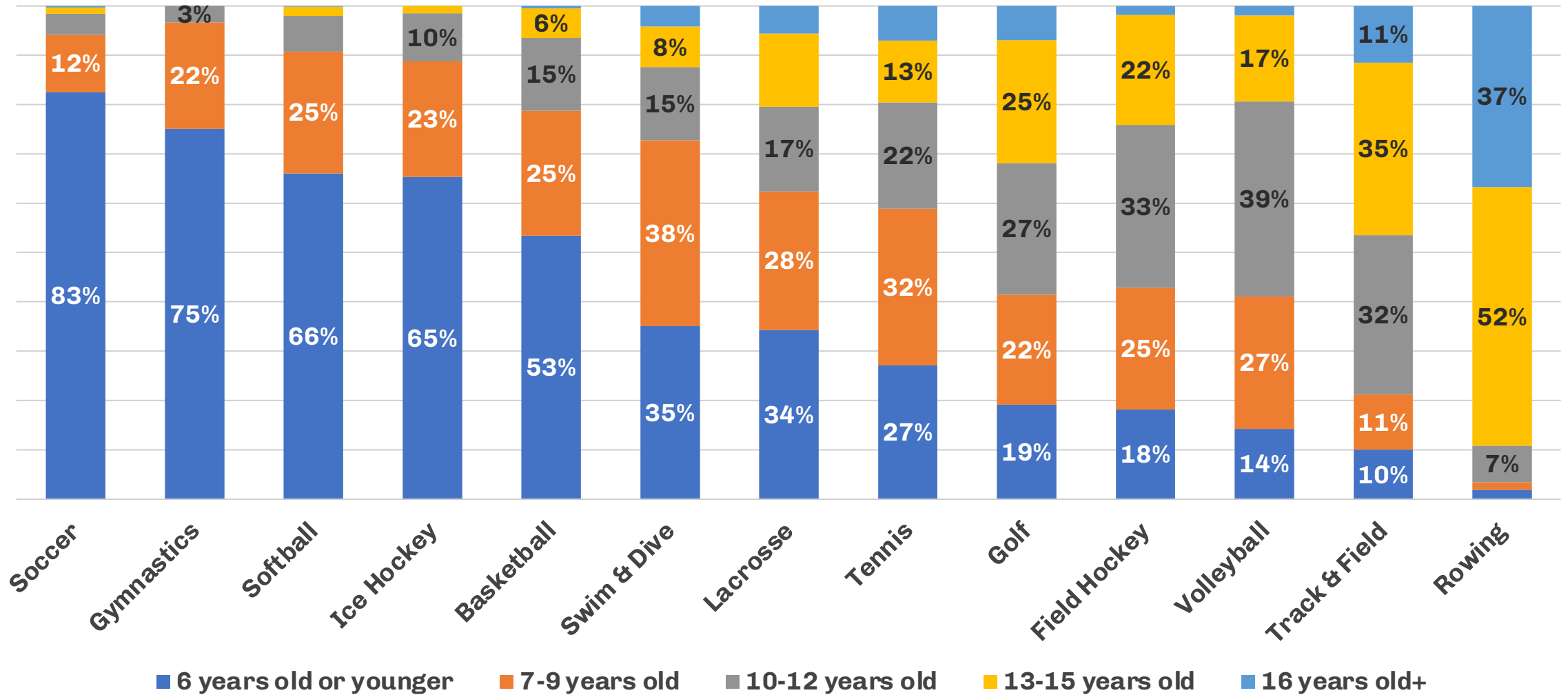


Note: Percentages below 5% not displayed.

Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Age At Which Began Playing Sport

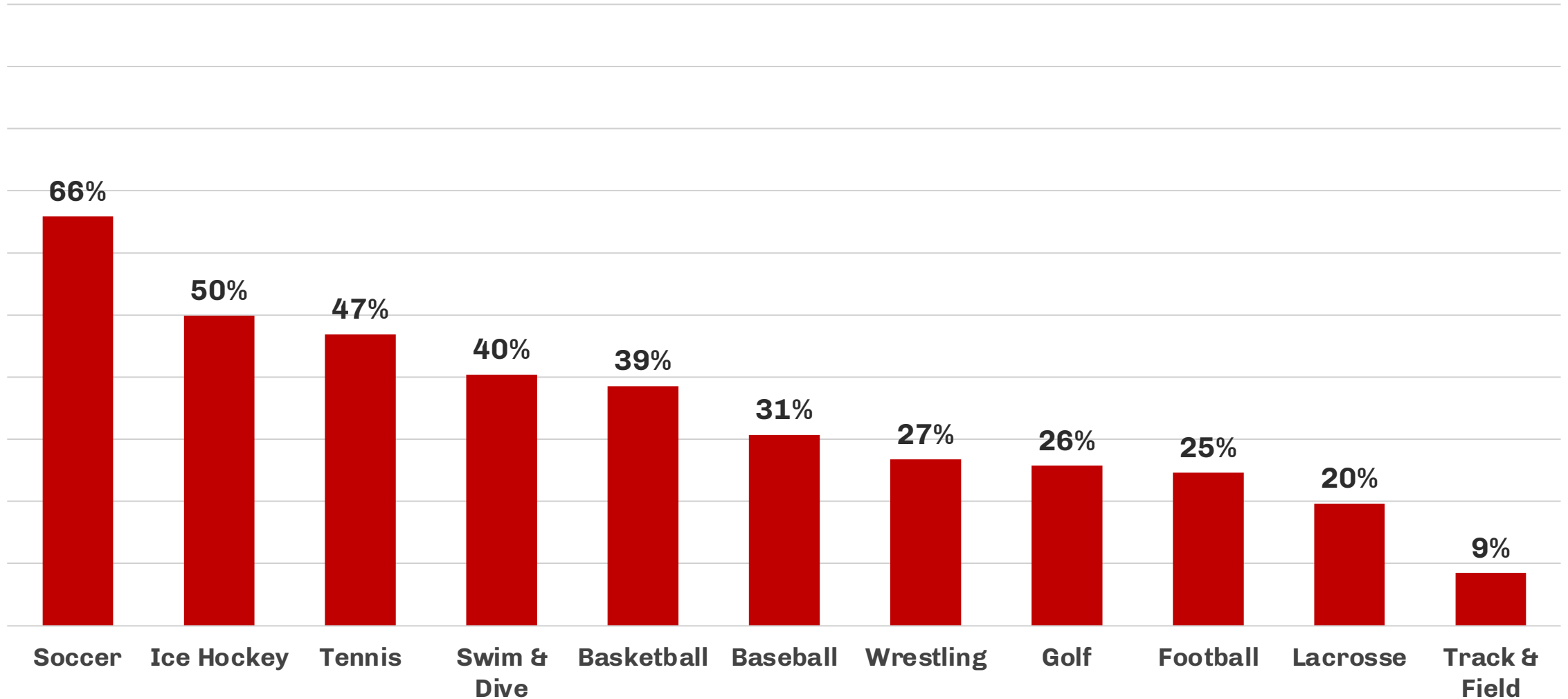
(Women's Sports Athletes, Overall)



Note: Percentages below 5% not displayed.

Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

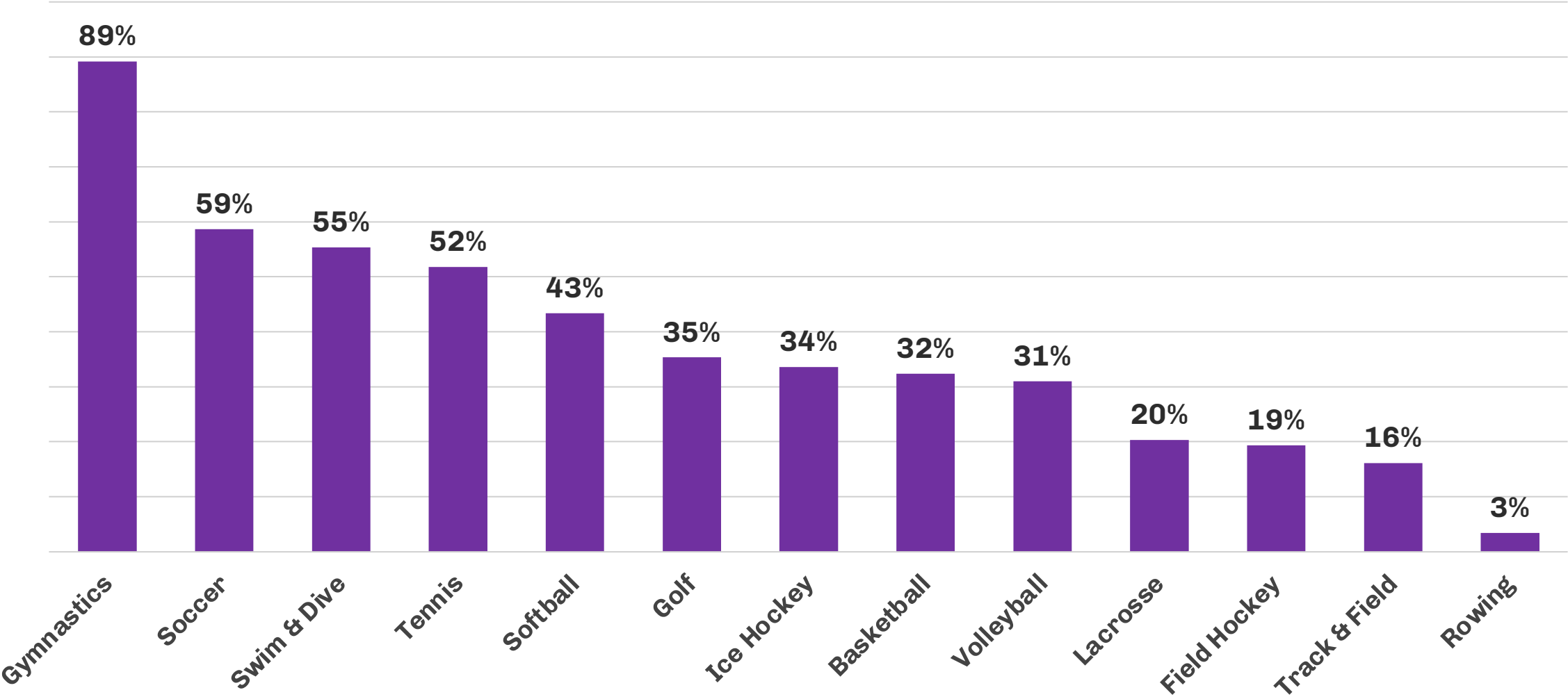
Percent of Men's Sports Athletes Who Specialized in their Sport by Age 12 (Overall)



Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

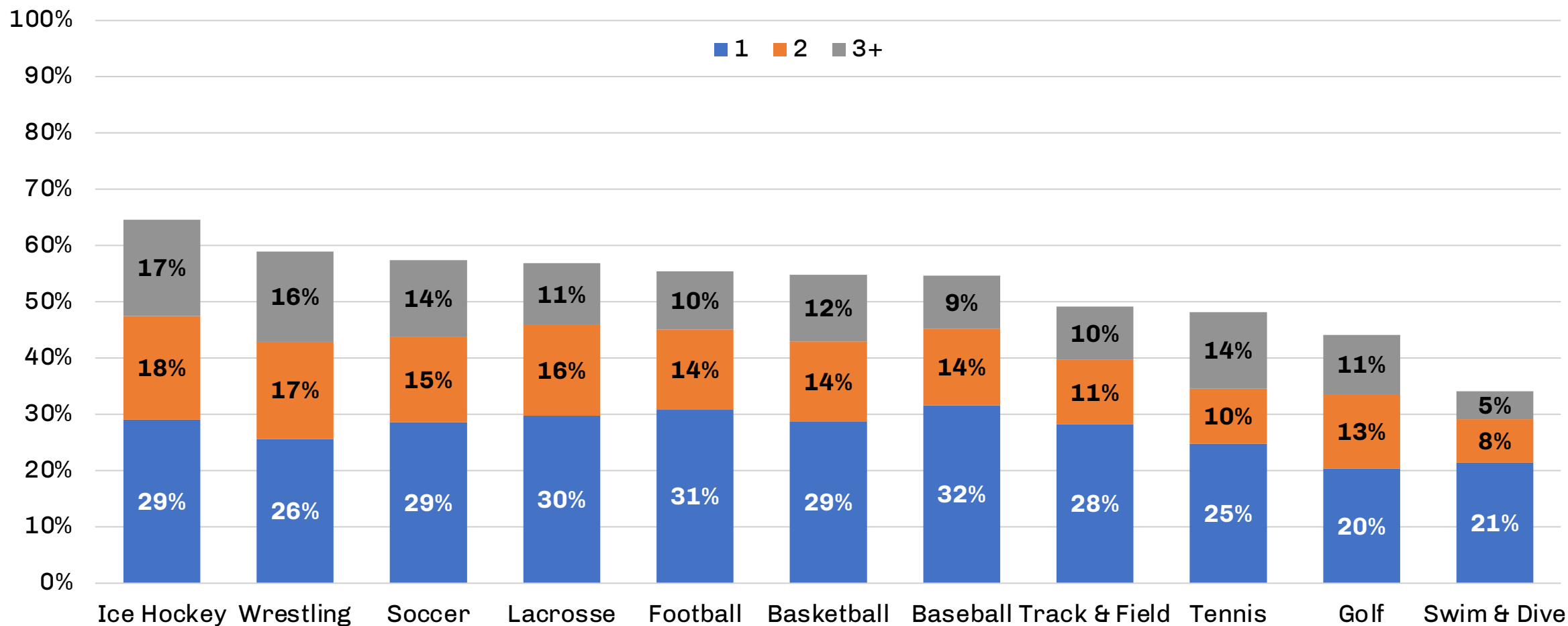
Percent of Women's Sports Athletes Who Specialized in their Sport by Age 12

(Overall)



Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Percentage Who Sustained One or More Major Sport-Related Injuries Pre-College (Men's Sports, All Divisions)



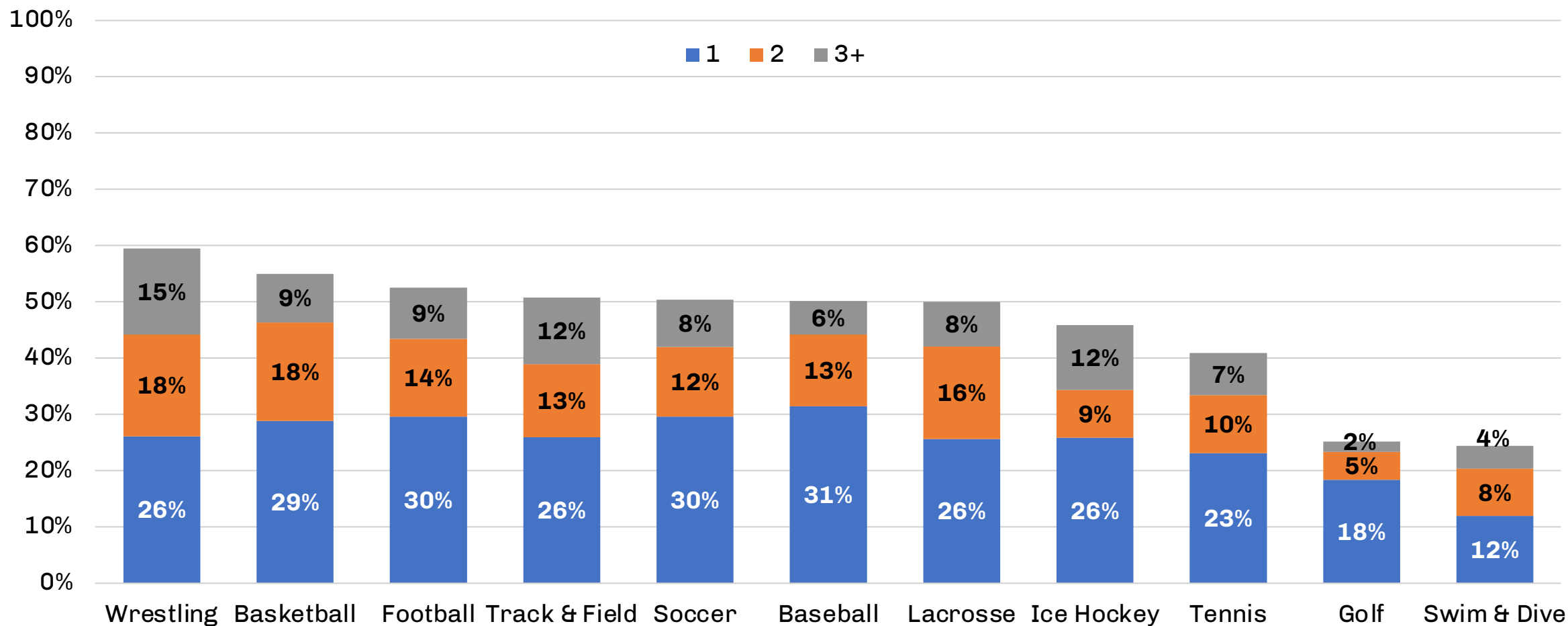
Note: Major injury defined as “sport-related injury requiring surgery, hospitalization or more than a month away from training or competition” during college. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).



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Percentage Who Sustained One or More Major Sport-Related Injuries During College

(Juniors and Above, Men's Sports, All Divisions)

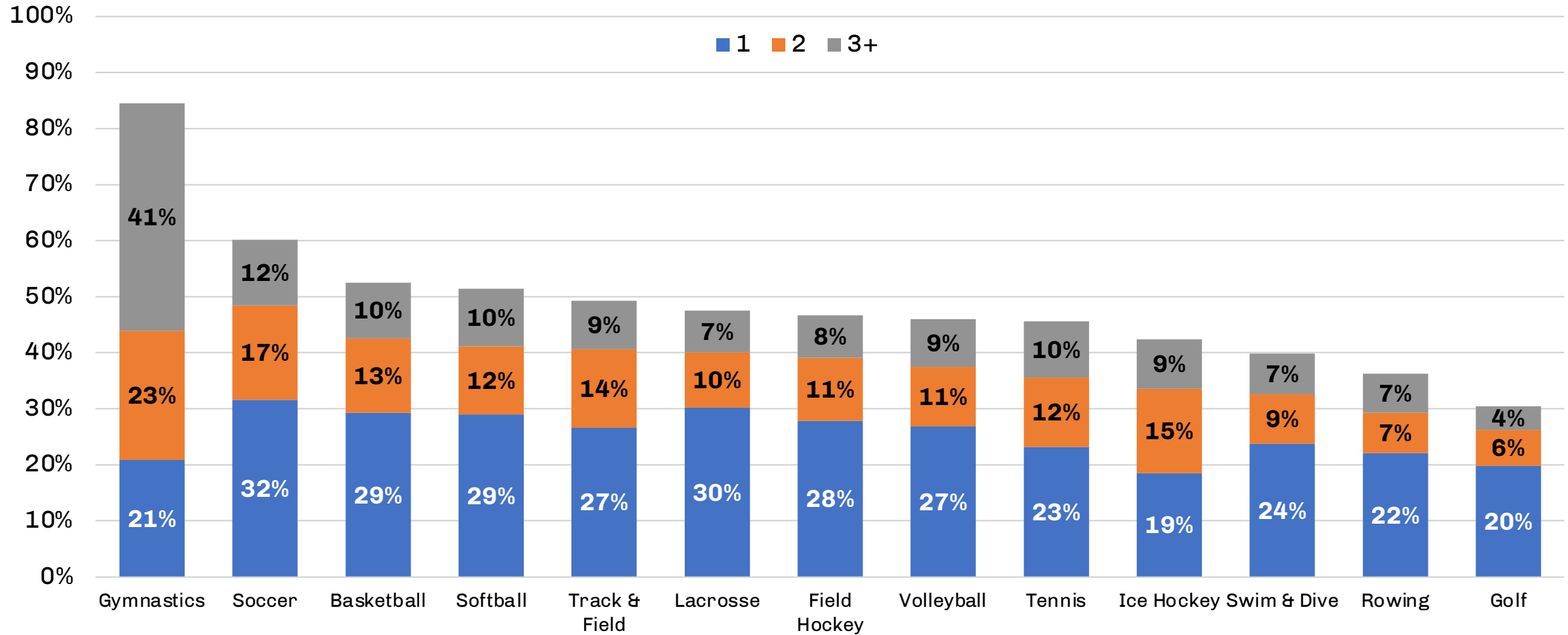


Note: Major injury defined as “sport-related injury requiring surgery, hospitalization or more than a month away from training or competition” during college. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).



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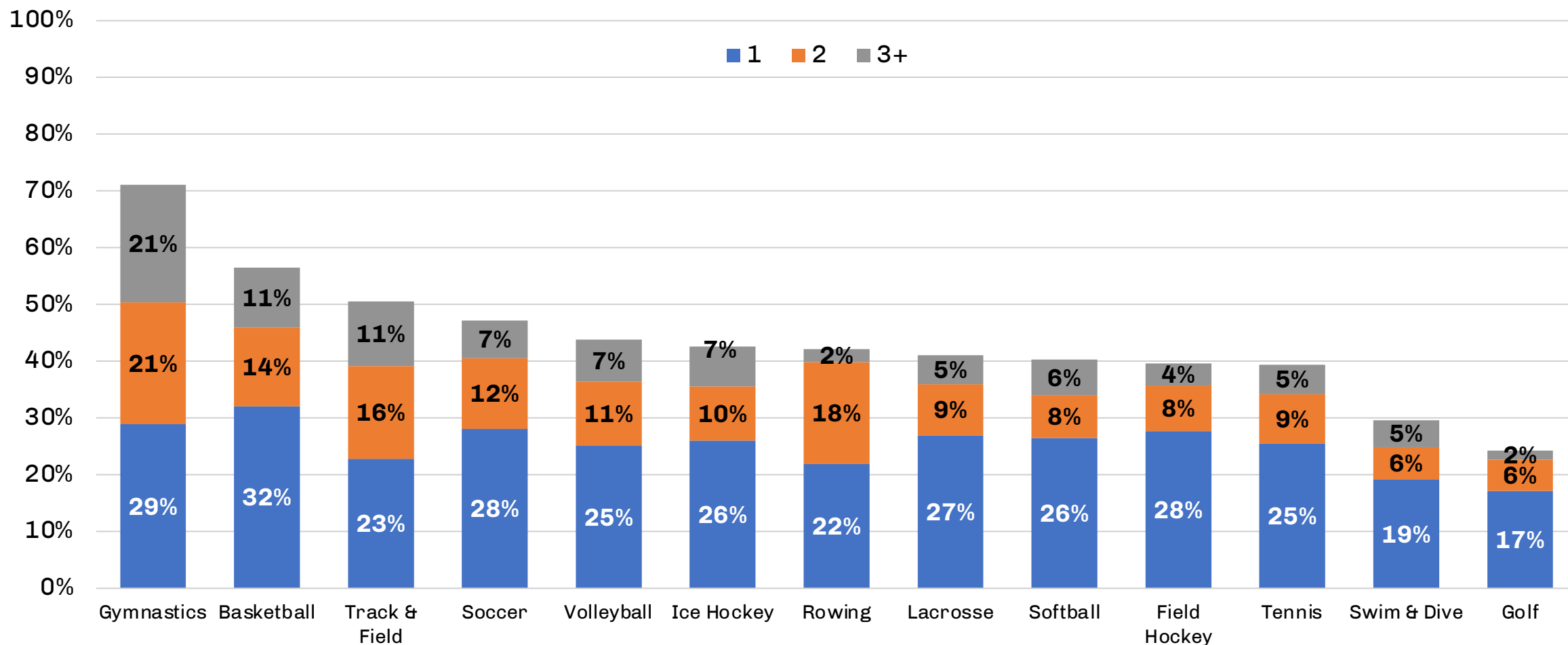
Percentage Who Sustained One or More Major Sport-Related Injuries Pre-College (Women's Sports, All Divisions)



Note: Major injury defined as “sport-related injury requiring surgery, hospitalization or more than a month away from training or competition” during college. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Percentage Who Sustained One or More Major Sport-Related Injuries During College

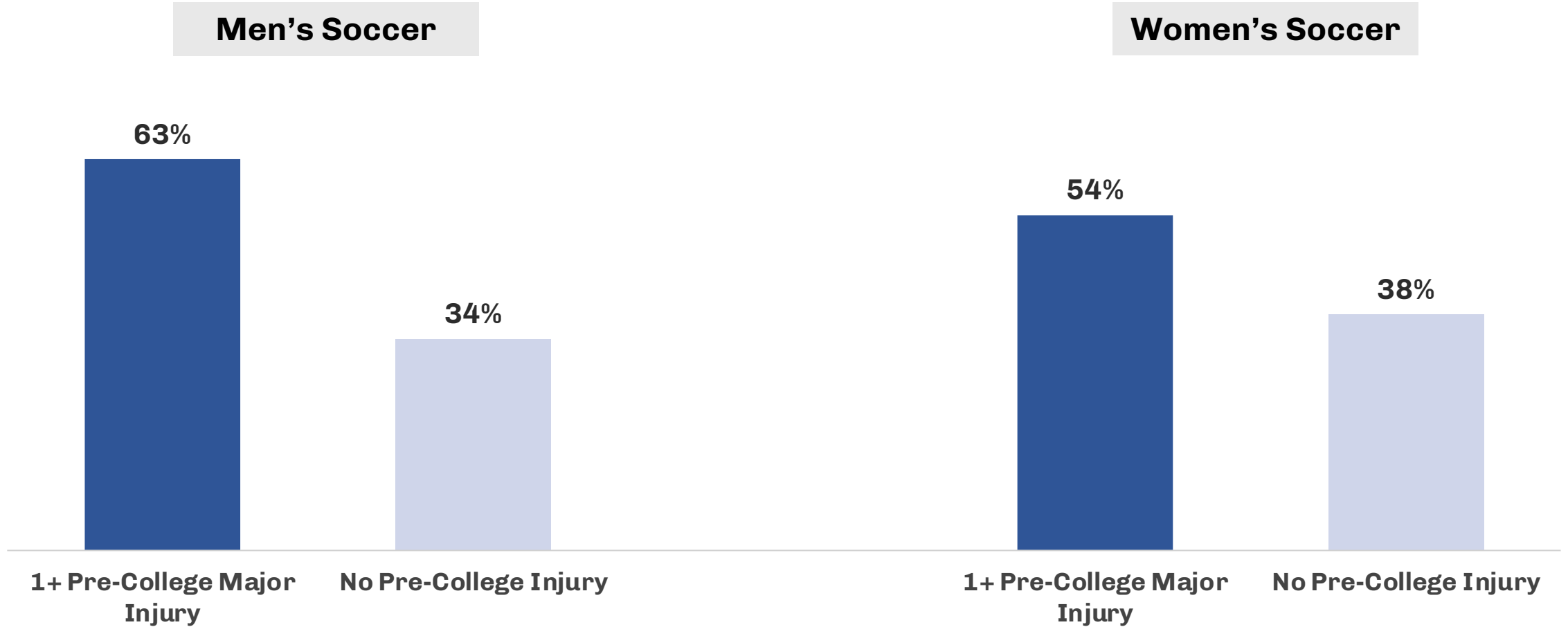
(Juniors and Above, Women's Sports, All Divisions)



Note: Major injury defined as “sport-related injury requiring surgery, hospitalization or more than a month away from training or competition” during college. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

Percentage of NCAA Athletes with a Major Sport-Related Injury In College as a Function of Pre-College Injury History

(Soccer, All Divisions, Juniors and Above)



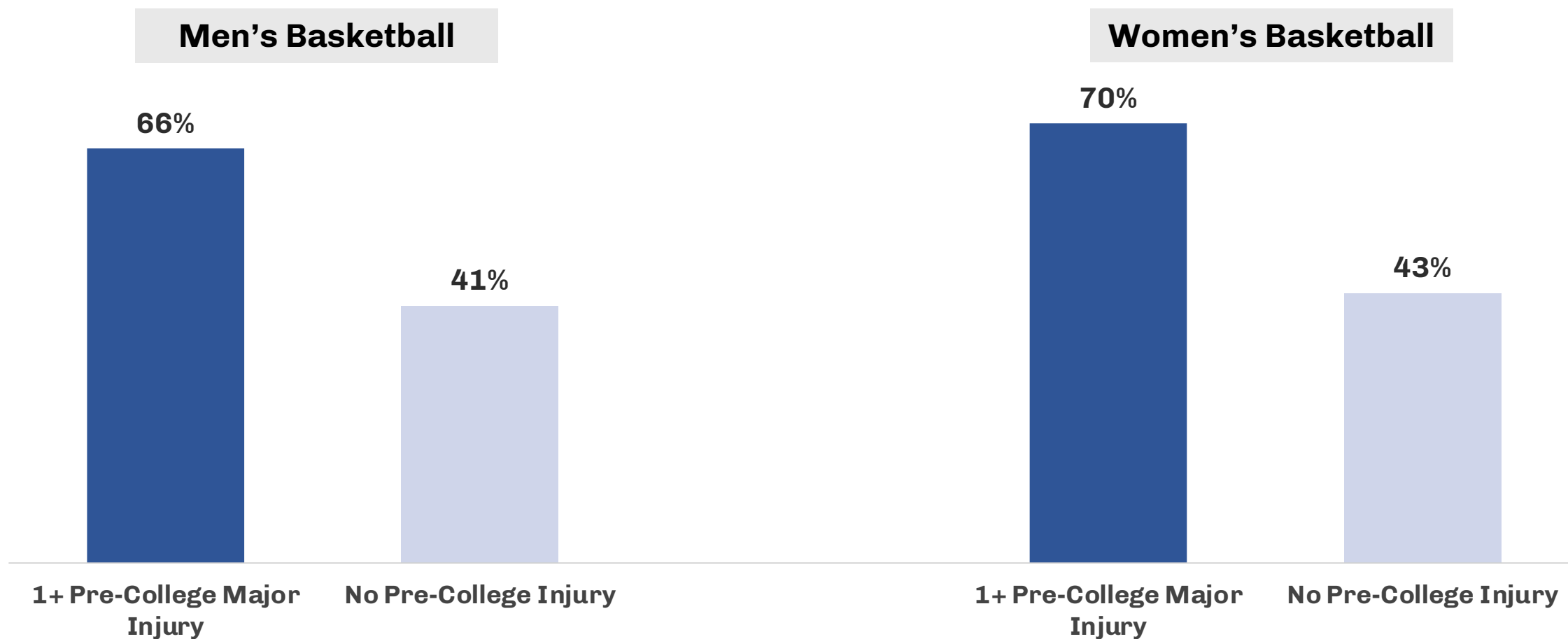
Note: Major injury defined as “sport-related injury requiring surgery, hospitalization or more than a month away from training or competition.” Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).



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Percentage of NCAA Athletes with a Major Sport-Related Injury In College as a Function of Pre-College Injury History

(Basketball, All Divisions, Juniors and Above)



Note: Major injury defined as “sport-related injury requiring surgery, hospitalization or more than a month away from training or competition.” Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

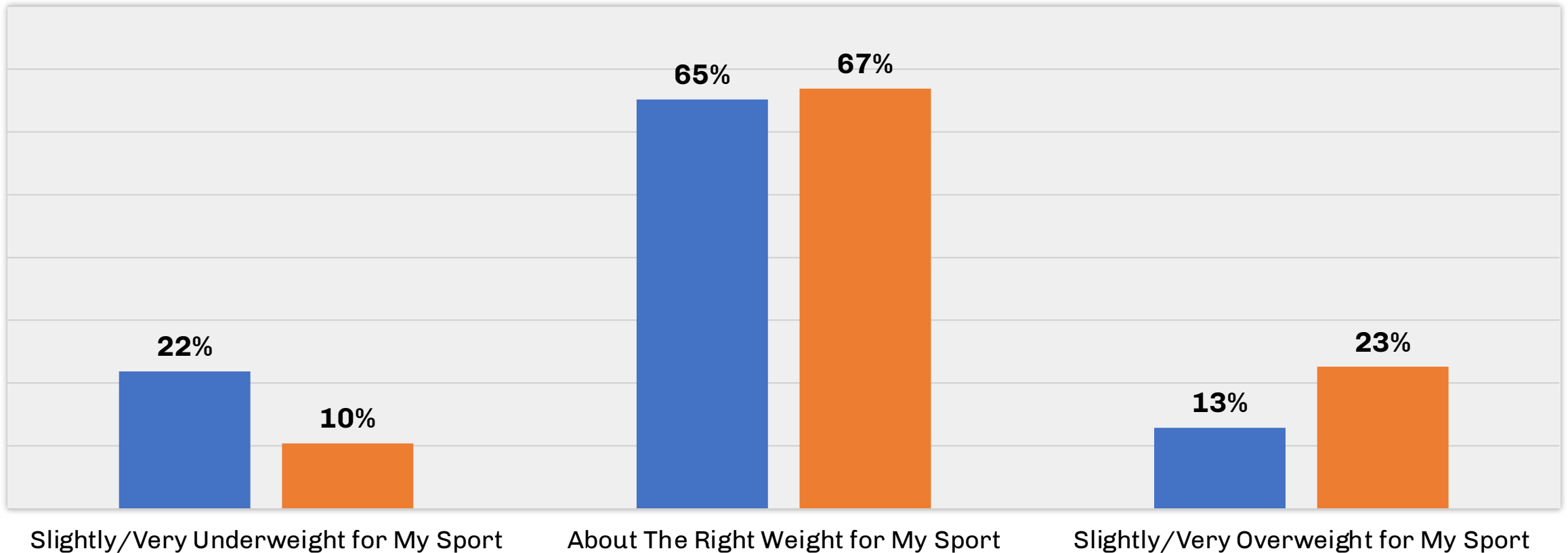


RESEARCH

Weight, Body Image and Nutrition

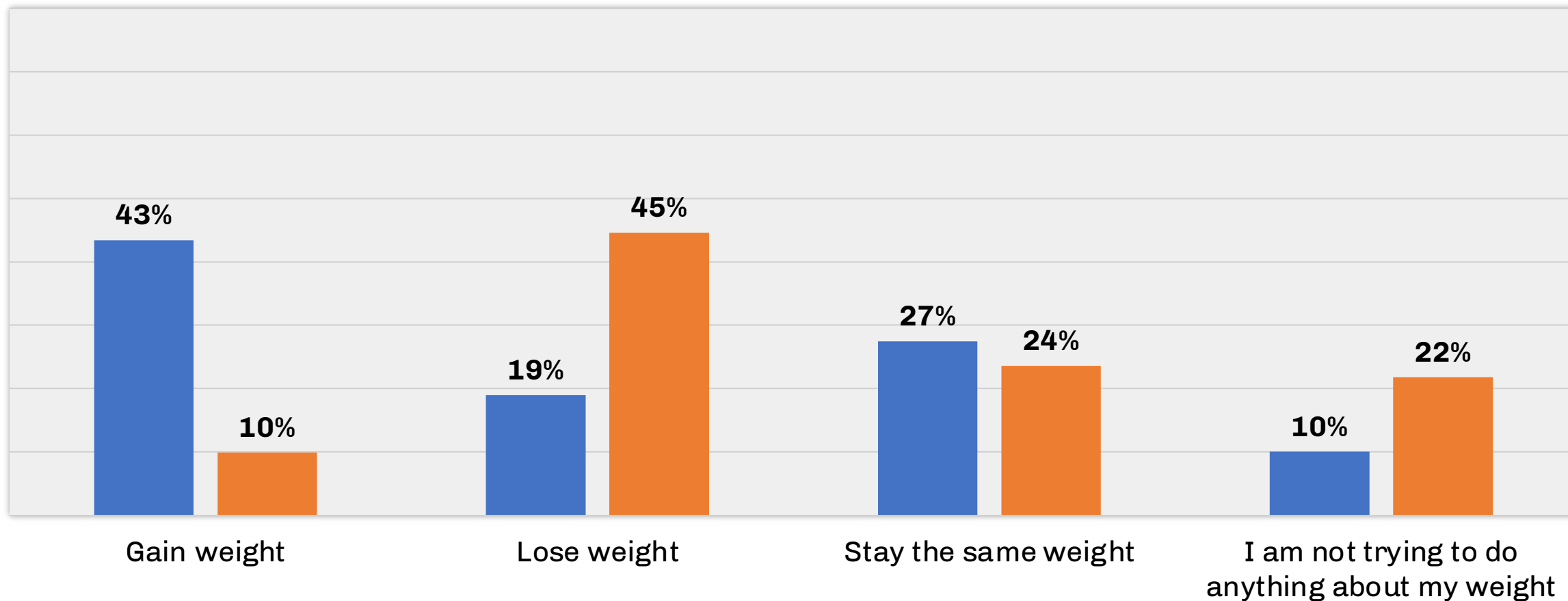
How do you describe your weight?

■ Men's Sports ■ Women's Sports

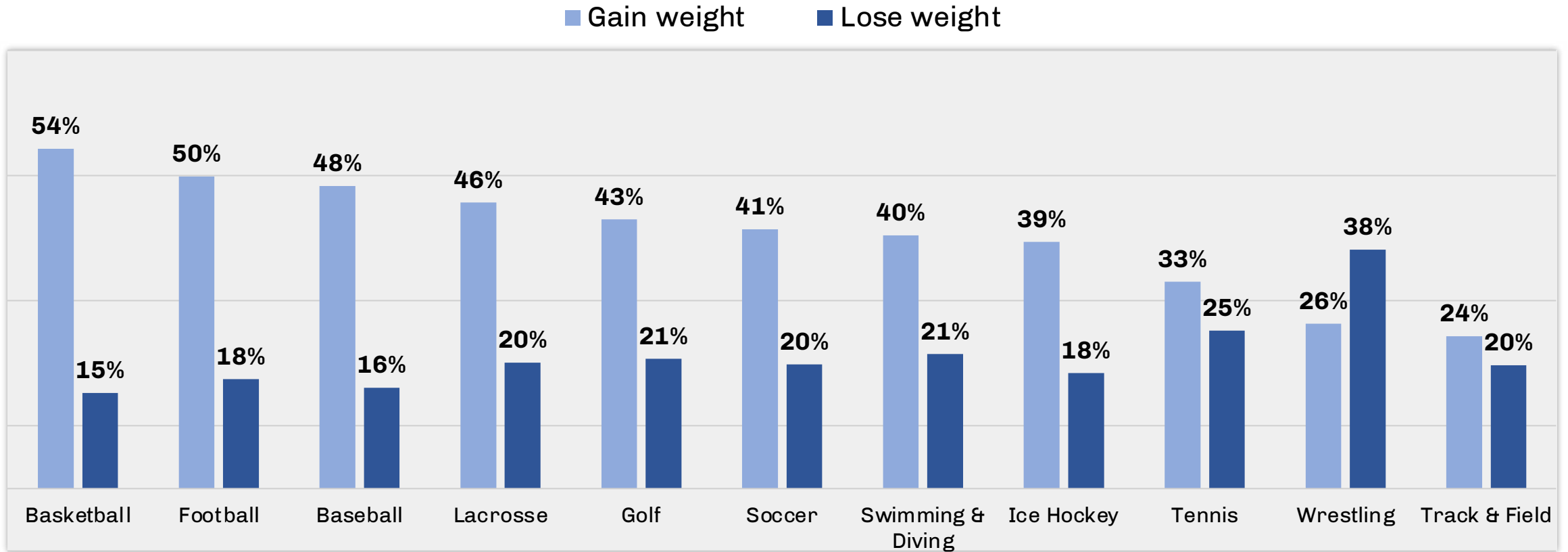


Which of the following are you trying to do about your weight?

■ Men's Sports ■ Women's Sports



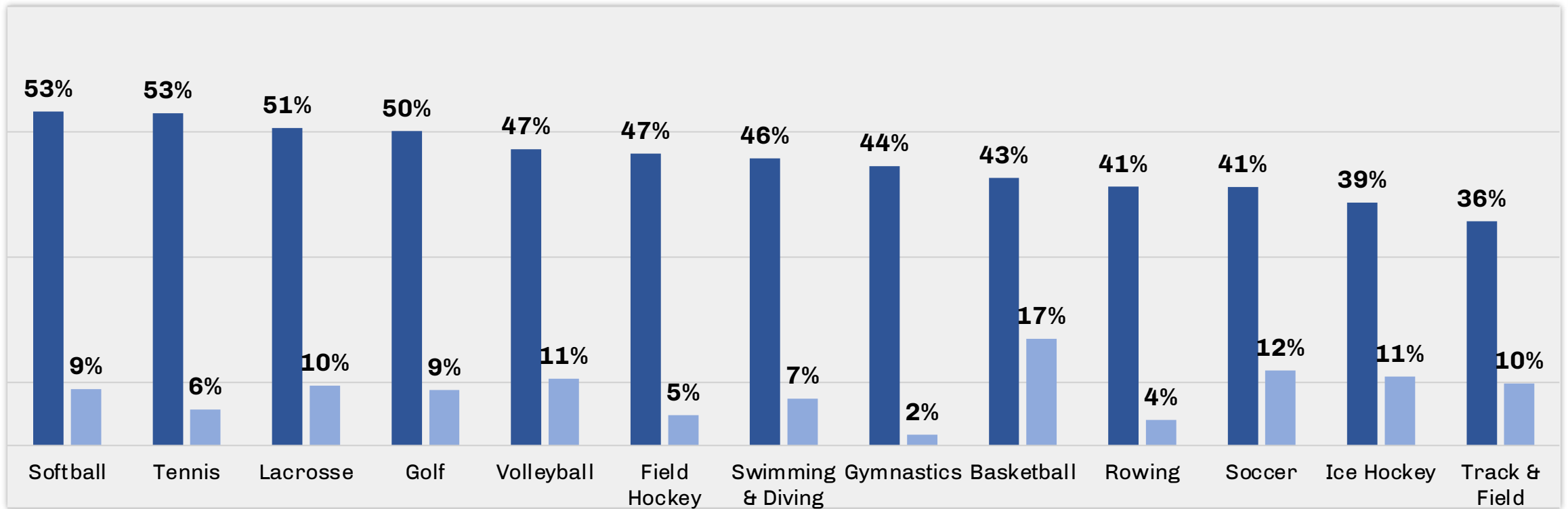
Which of the following are you trying to do about your weight? (Men's Sports)



Which of the following are you trying to do about your weight?

(Women's Sports)

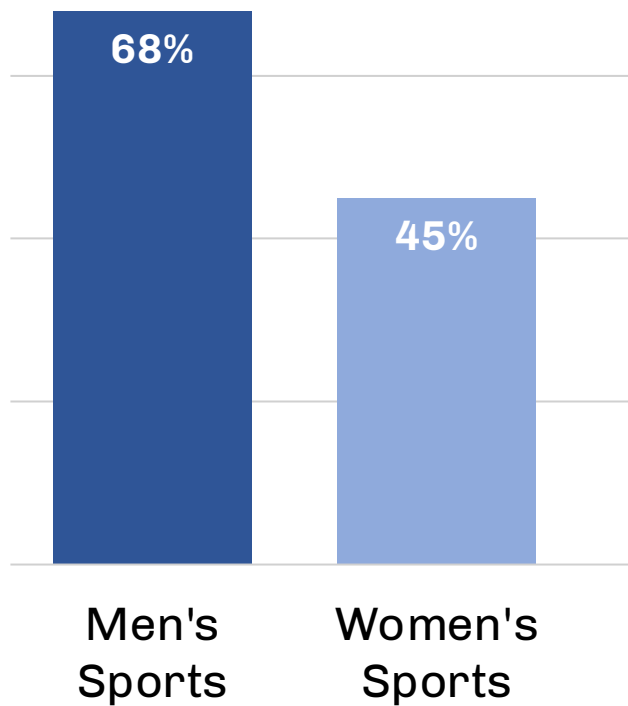
■ Lose weight ■ Gain weight



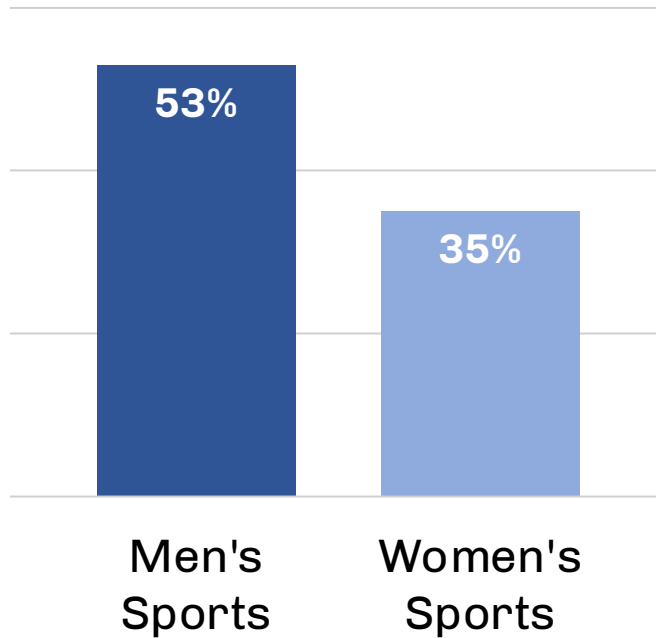
Body Image

(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)

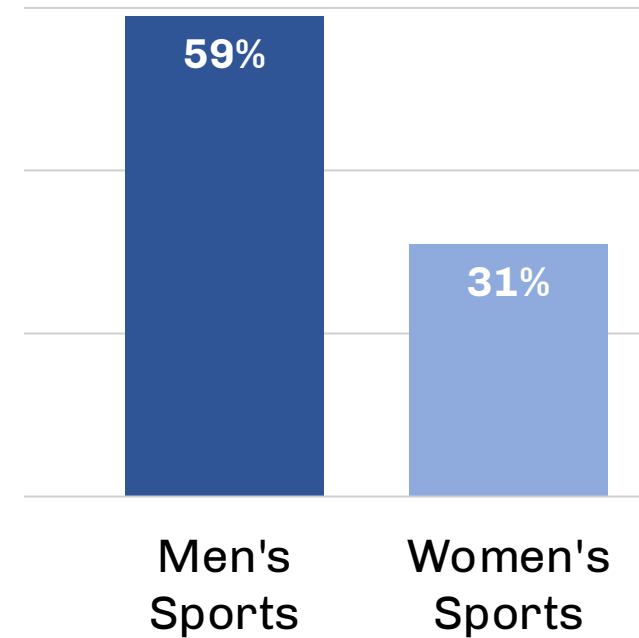
I think I have a good body



I am happy with my current weight

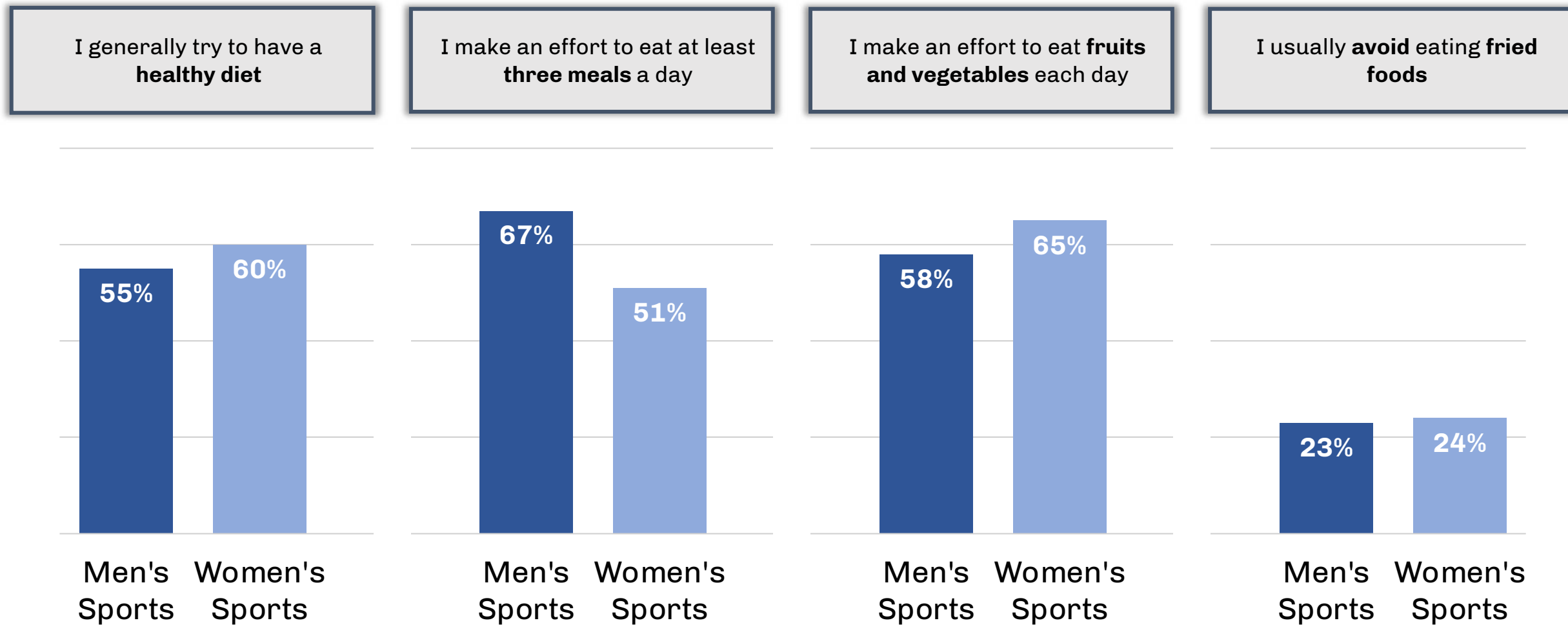


I like what I look like in pictures



Nutritional Habits

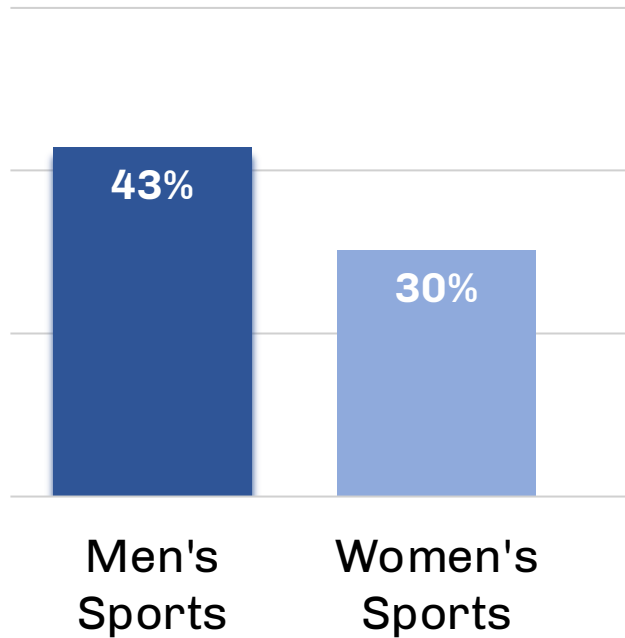
(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)



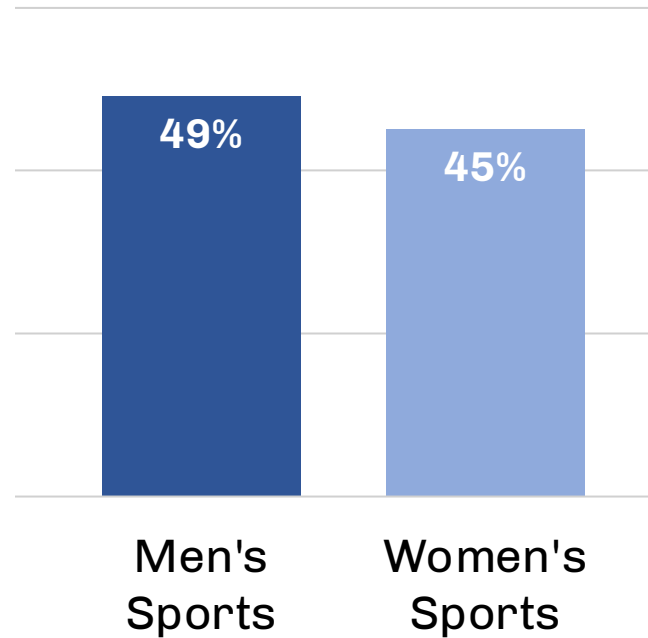
Access to Healthy Food

(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)

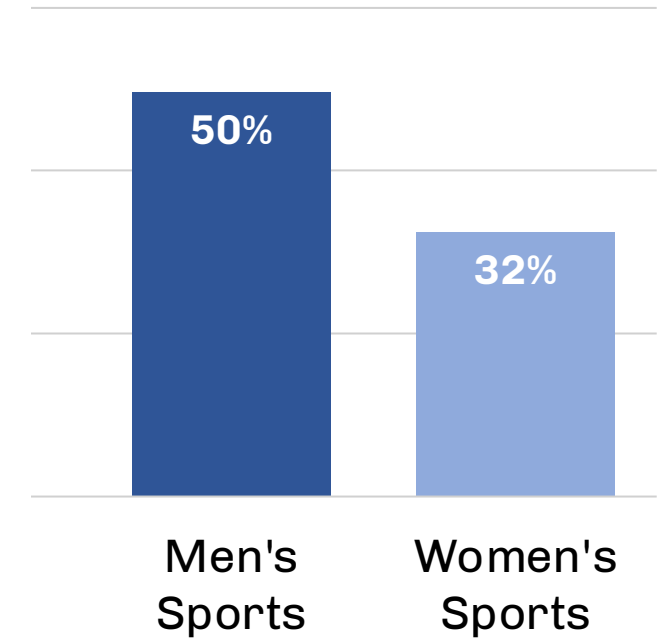
Healthy food options are **readily available** to me after practice and competition



I can **afford** to eat healthy meals each day



I have **time** to eat healthy meals each day

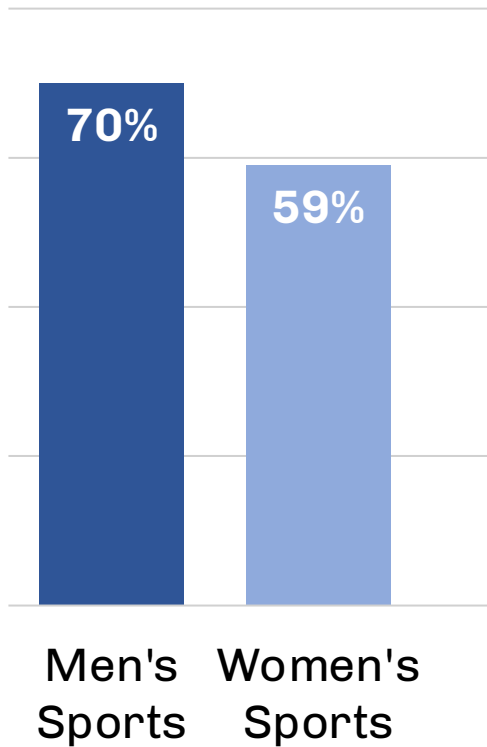


Wellness Support

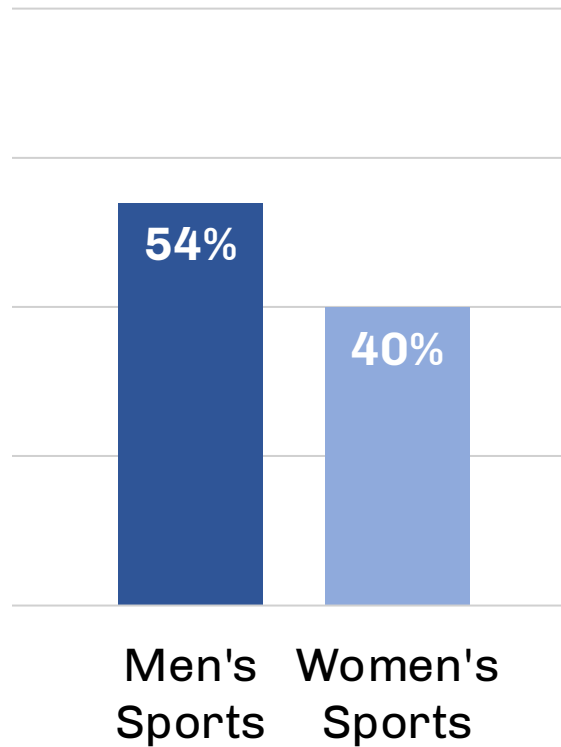
Well-Being Support from Coaches

(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)

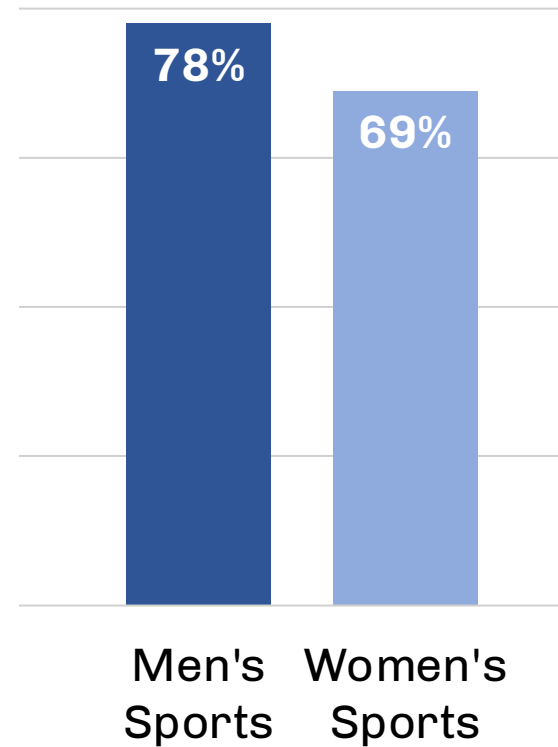
My coaches care about my **mental** well-being.



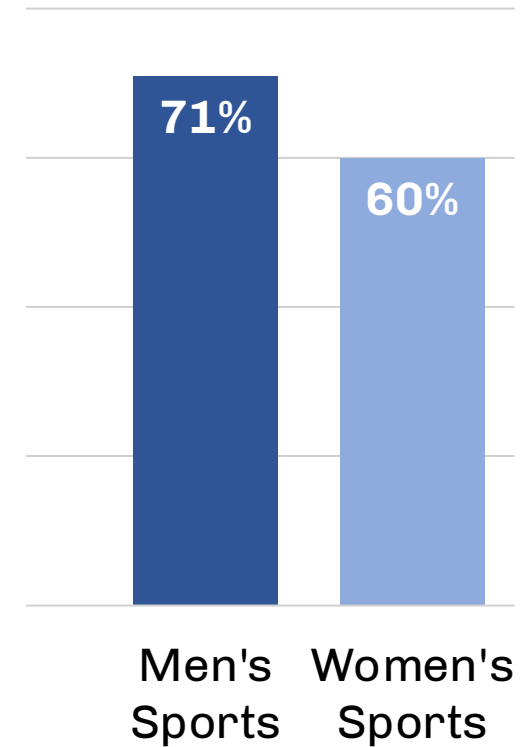
I would feel comfortable talking with my coaches about **mental health** issues.



My coaches care about my **physical** well-being.

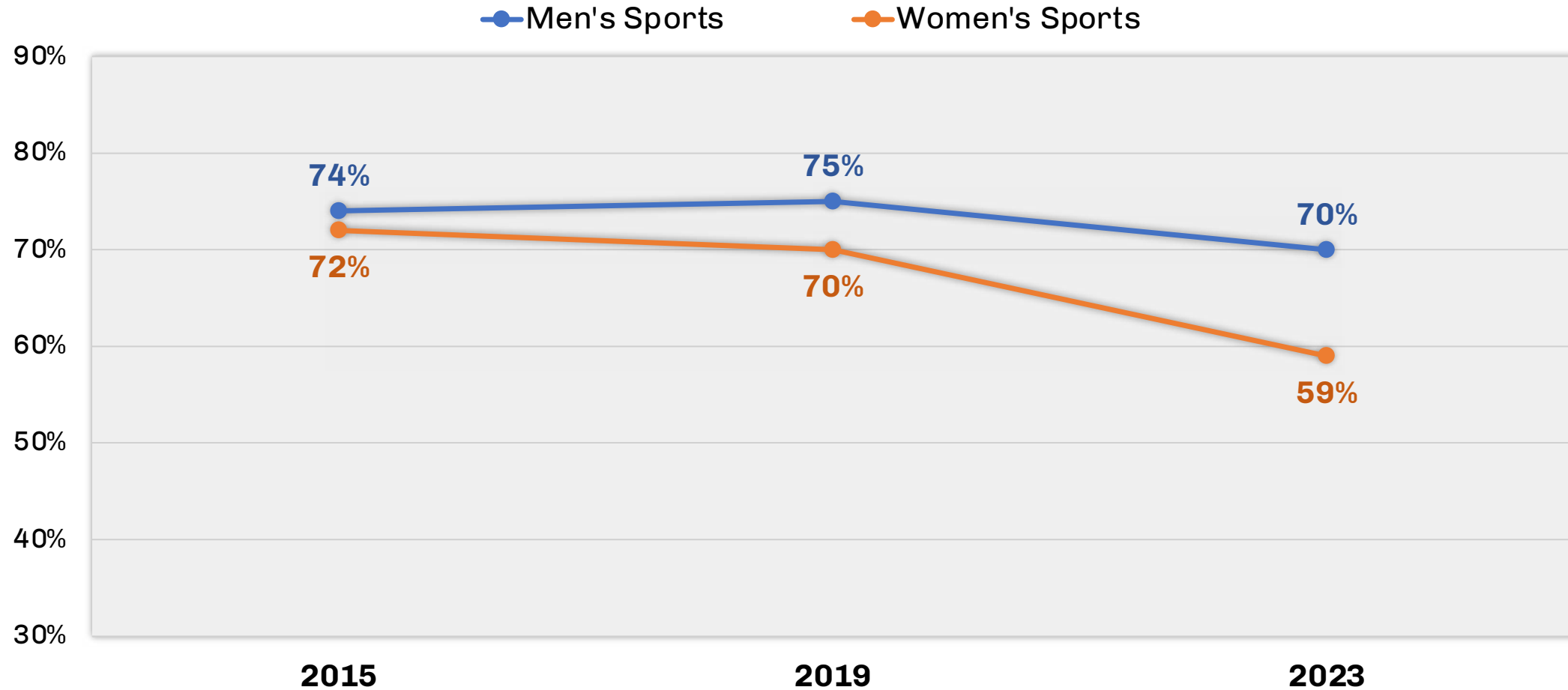


I would feel comfortable talking with my coaches about **physical health** issues.



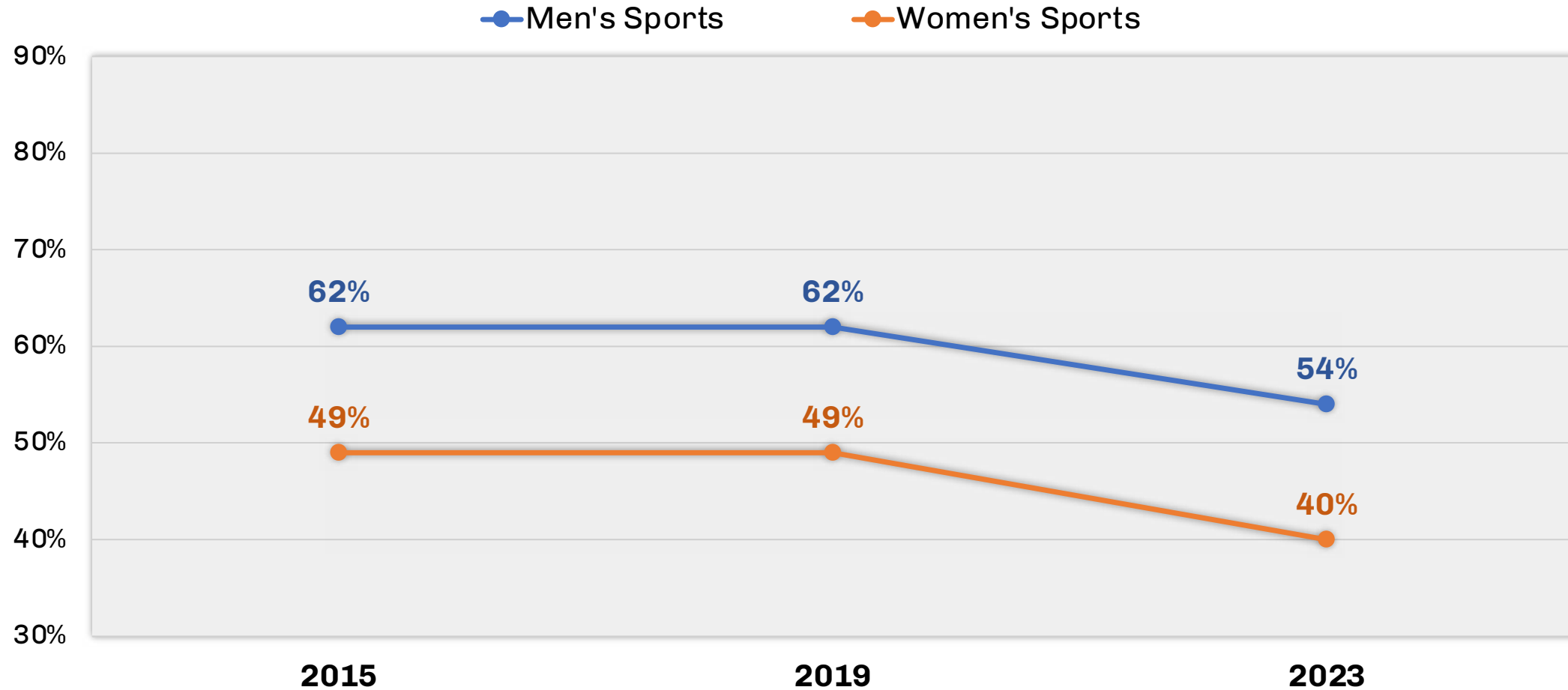
“My coaches care about my mental well-being”

(Percentage of Participations Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)



Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Sources: NCAA GOALS Studies (2015, 2019) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

“I would feel comfortable talking to my coaches about mental health issues” (Percentage of Participations Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)

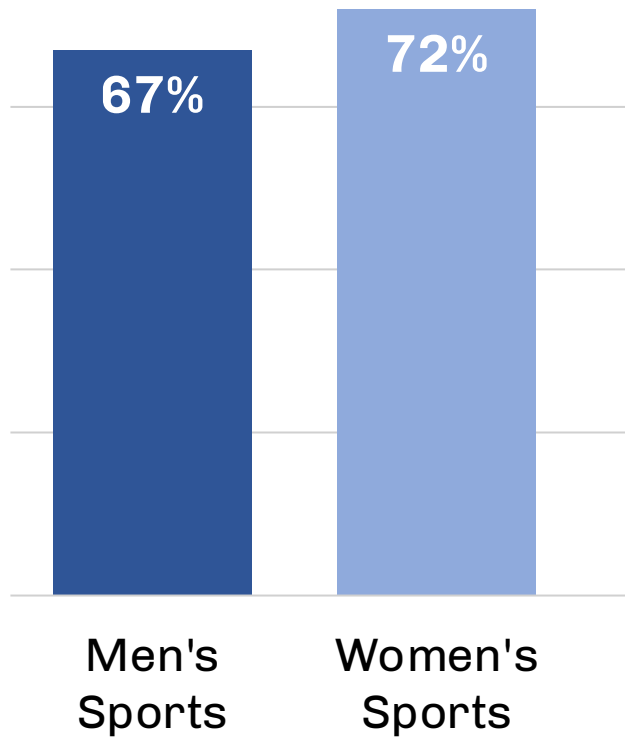


Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Sources: NCAA GOALS Studies (2015, 2019) and NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

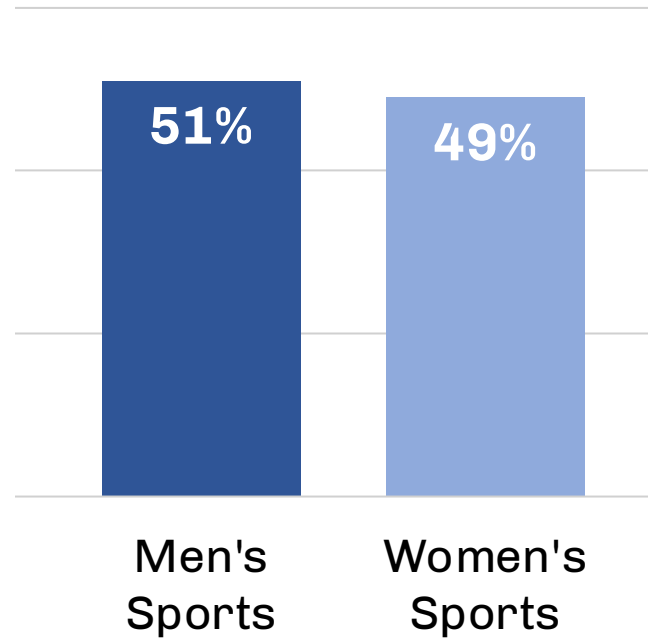
Campus Mental Health Support

(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)

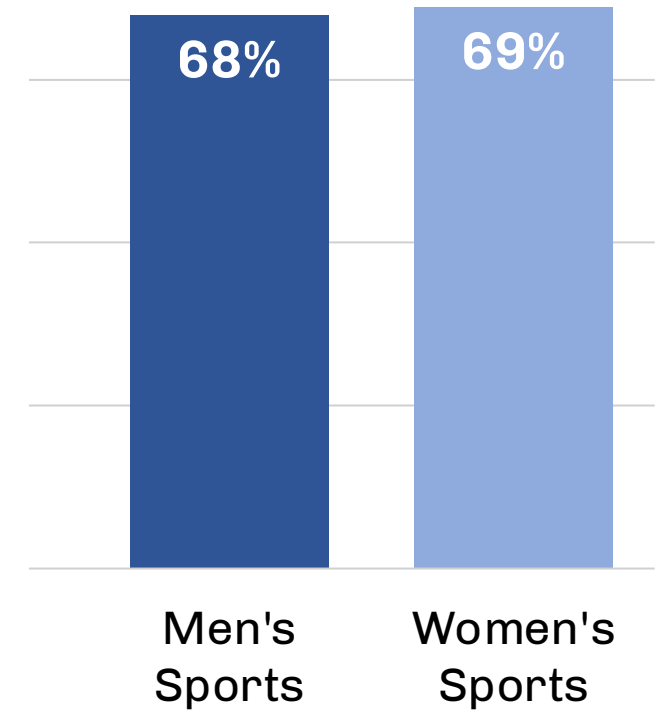
I know where to go on campus if I have mental health concerns.



I would feel comfortable seeking support from a mental health provider on this campus.



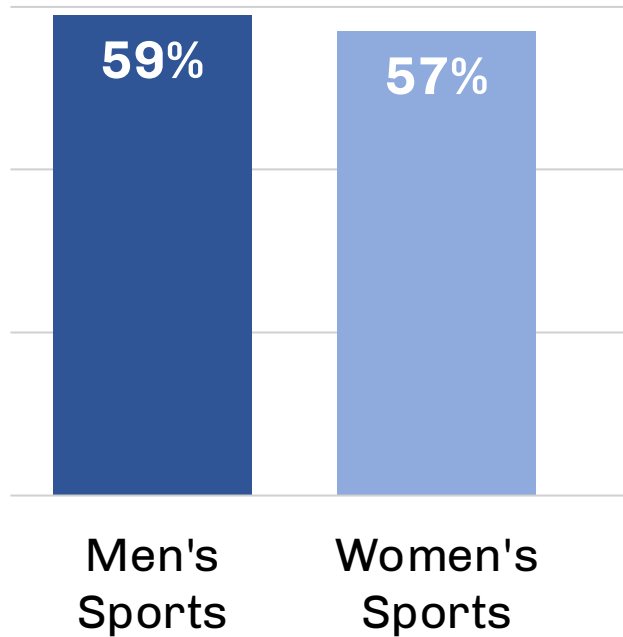
There are people on campus I can trust to give me support when I need it.



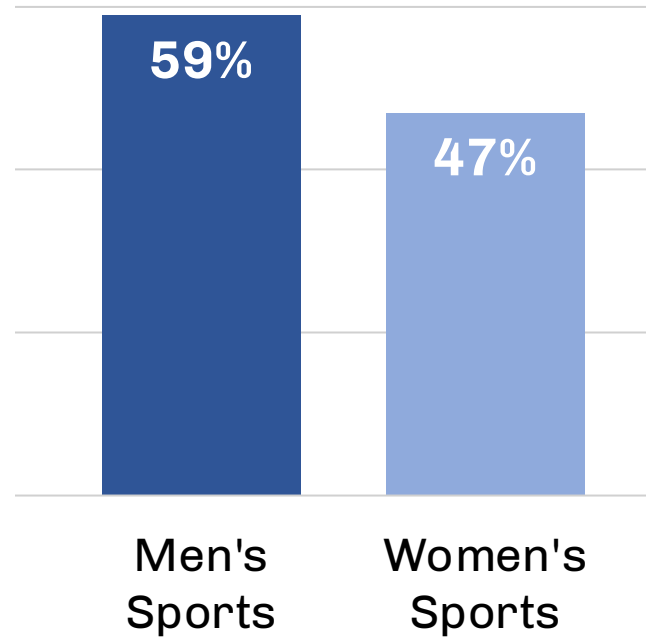
Mental Health Support in Athletics

(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)

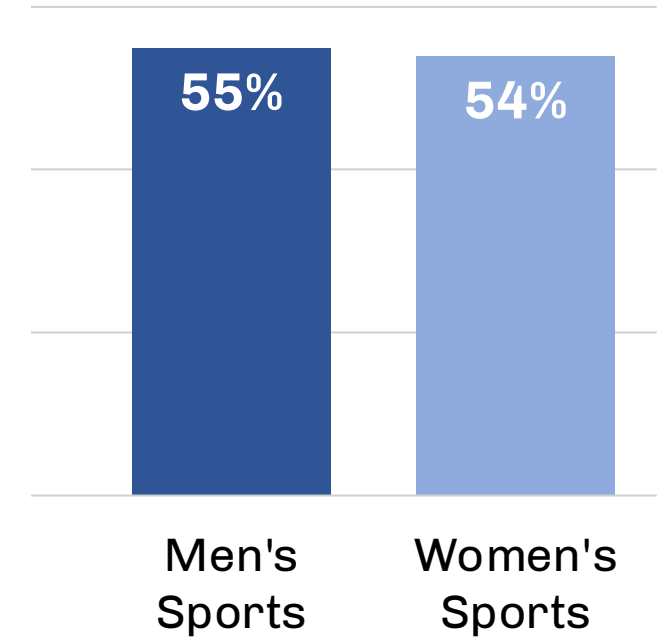
I know how to help a teammate that is experiencing a mental health issue.



I feel that student-athletes' mental health is a priority to our athletics department.



Student-athletes on this campus take the mental health concerns of their teammates seriously.



Willingness to Intervene

(Percent responding “Likely” or “Extremely Likely”)

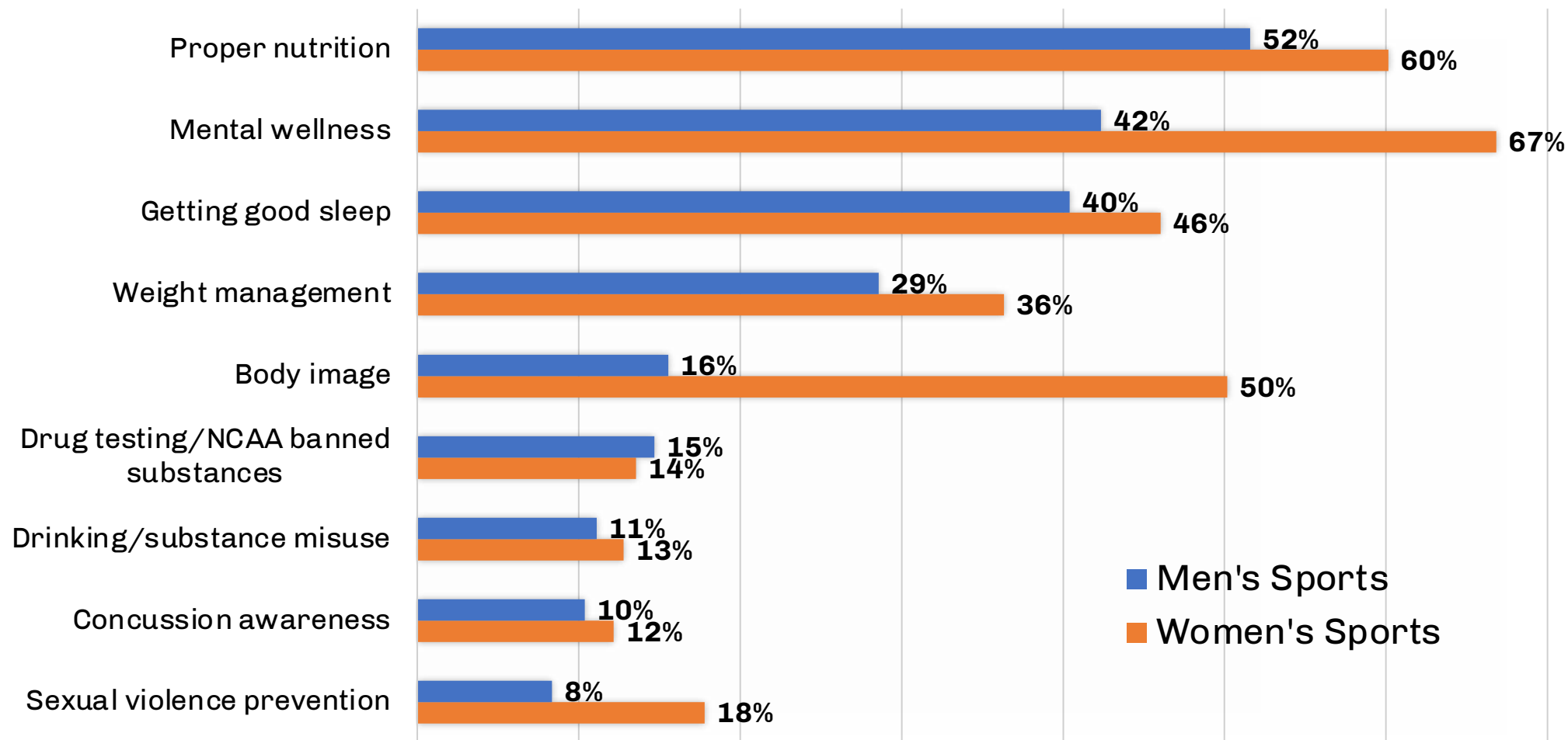
	Men's Sports			Women's Sports		
	2012	2016	2023	2012	2016	2023
Accompany a teammate home if they've had a lot to drink.	87%	88%	91%	93%	95%	95%
Stop a teammate from driving if drinking.	81%	84%	87%	93%	95%	95%
Intervene in a situation if it could lead to unwanted* sexual behavior.	63%	78%	85%	71%	90%	89%
Confront a teammate if they are treating partner inappropriately.	59%	70%	74%	47%	67%	62%
Walk away from a confrontation.	58%	61%	62%	74%	77%	68%

 Green indicates a decrease of 5 percentage points or more from 2016.

 Yellow indicates an increase of 5 percentage points or more from 2016.

Note: Endorsement of top two points on a 5-point scale. *In 2012, the question referred to “inappropriate sexual behavior;” this was updated to “unwanted” in 2016 and repeated in 2024. Sources: NCAA Social Environments Study (2012, 2016); NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study (2023).

“I wish the coaches and administrators at my school talked more with my team about the following wellness topics”





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