



Research

The background of the slide is a photograph of a group of athletes in a huddle, with their hands stacked in the center. One person's wrist with a blue watch is visible. The image has a dark, slightly blurred quality with some white specks, possibly snow or rain.

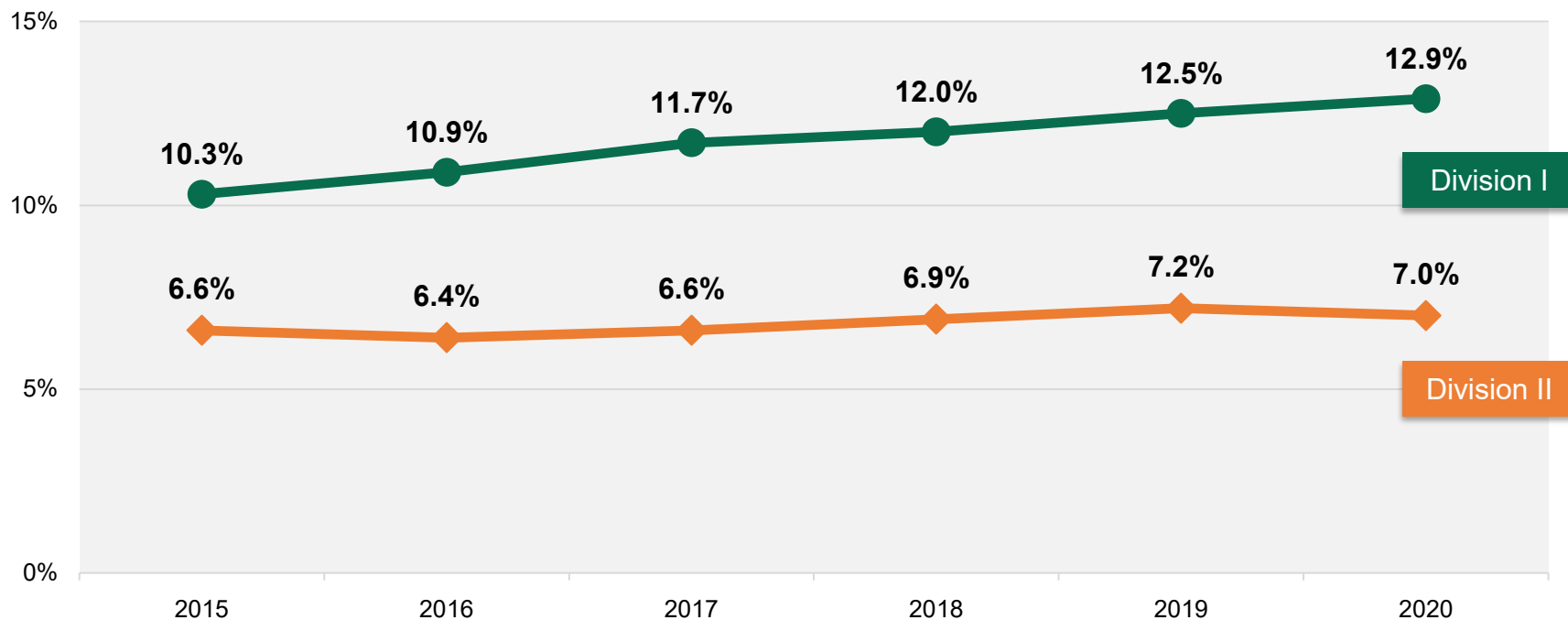
# **Trends in the Participation of International Student-Athletes in NCAA Divisions I and II**

**August 2021**

# Methodology

- ▶ Percentages are based on first-year student-athletes (nontransfers) at Division I or II colleges. Similar data are not available for Division III.
- ▶ Student-athletes with a non-U.S. home address were categorized as international. Students from the 50 U.S. states and U.S. territories (Guam, Puerto Rico, etc.) were considered domestic. See Detailed Methods slide for more information.
- ▶ Data include all first-year student-athletes who were in a 2020 Division I Academic Progress Rate cohort or in the 2020 Division II Academic Performance Census. This may exclude some Division I walk-ons and others who do not meet academic tracking inclusion criteria in Divisions I or II.

## Overall Trends in International Student-Athlete Participation in Divisions I and II



**Total Numbers**

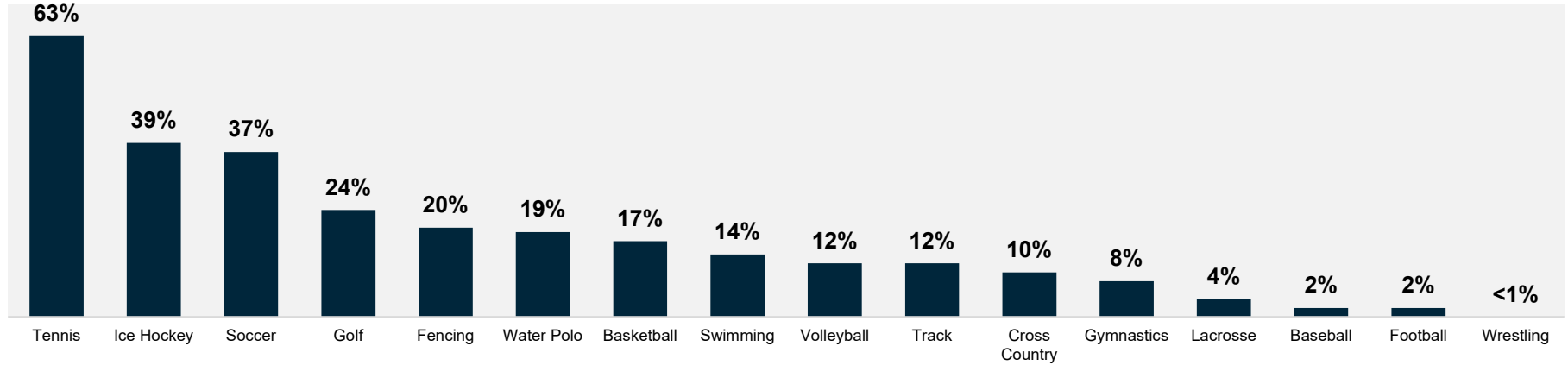
	2015	2020
DI	2,720	3,585
DII	1,862	2,112

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

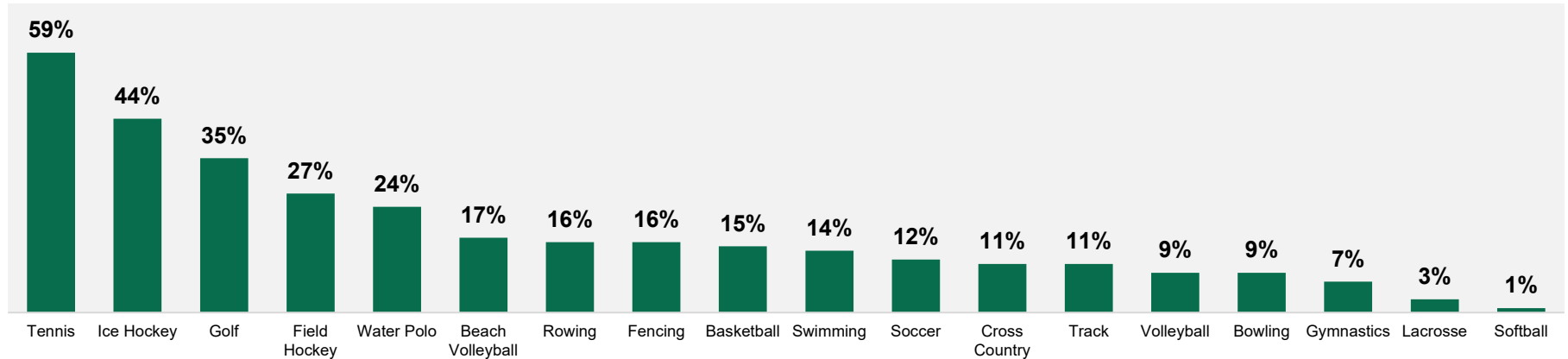
# Division I



## Percentage of International Student-Athletes in Division I Men's Sports

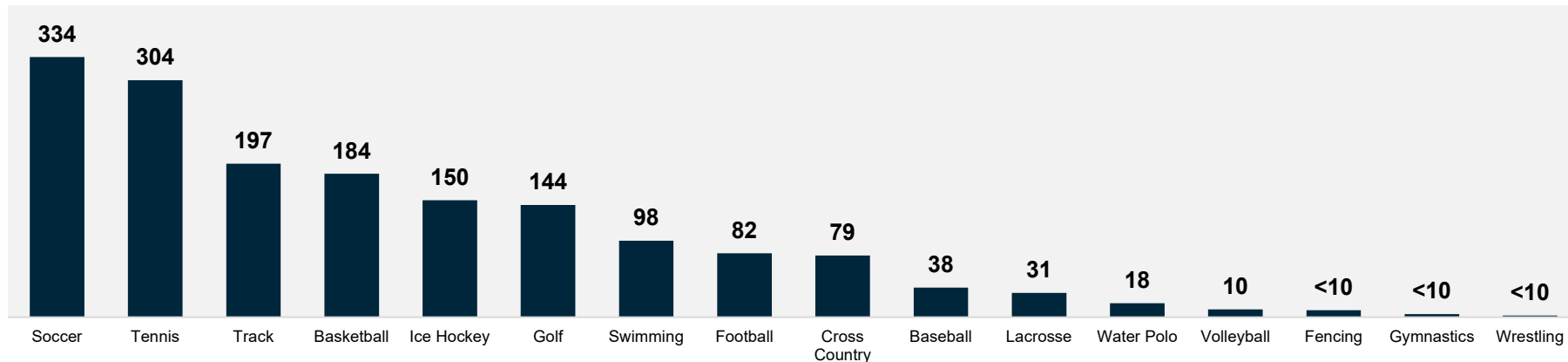


## Percentage of International Student-Athletes in Division I Women's Sports

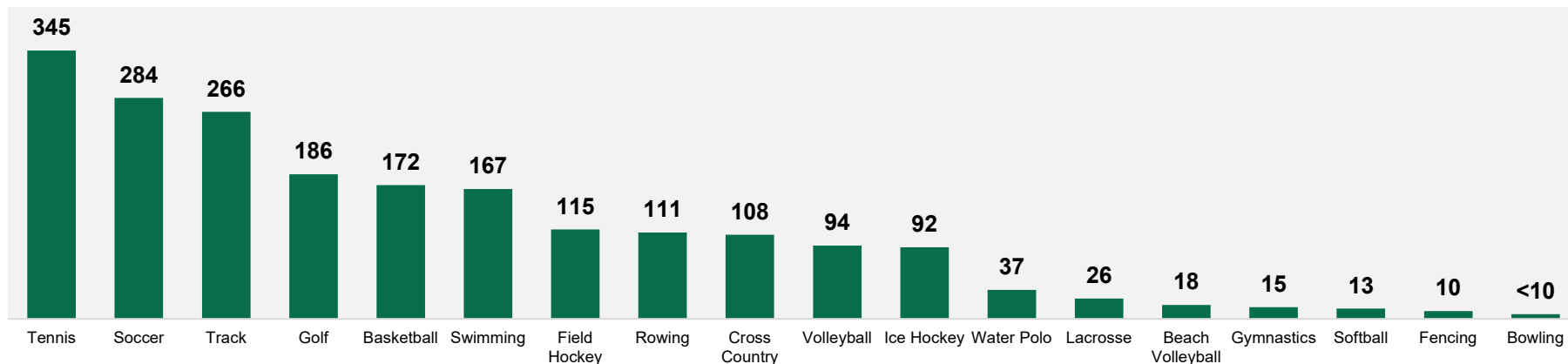


Note: Sports with >200 Division I student-athletes. Data shown are for first-year student-athletes (2020).

## Number of First-Year International Student-Athletes in Division I Men's Sports



## Number of First-Year International Student-Athletes in Division I Women's Sports



Note: Sports with >200 Division I student-athletes. Data shown are for first-year student-athletes (2020).



# Top Ten Home Countries by Percentage of First-Year Division I International Student-Athletes

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
CANADA	28.3%	24.4%	23.3%	22.3%	22.0%	22.1%
UNITED KINGDOM	7.5%	8.4%	7.0%	8.5%	8.0%	8.5%
GERMANY	6.5%	5.3%	6.2%	6.1%	5.3%	6.3%
SPAIN	4.5%	4.6%	4.1%	4.8%	4.9%	5.2%
AUSTRALIA	5.1%	5.2%	5.4%	5.1%	5.6%	5.0%
SWEDEN	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%	3.2%	3.7%	4.1%
FRANCE	2.0%	2.1%	2.4%	2.2%	2.0%	2.6%
NETHERLANDS	1.2%	1.9%	2.1%	2.4%	2.4%	2.6%
NEW ZEALAND	2.2%	2.6%	2.9%	2.7%	2.7%	2.3%
NORWAY	1.7%	1.6%	1.9%	1.7%	2.1%	2.0%

Note: Nations sorted by the highest (by percentage) representation of first-year international student-athletes in 2020. In 2015, international first-year student-athletes came from 110 nations and independent territories; in 2020, this number rose to 124.



# Top Ten Home Countries by Number of First-Year Division I International Student-Athletes

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
CANADA	769	714	731	733	755	791
UNITED KINGDOM	205	244	218	280	274	303
GERMANY	177	156	193	200	182	227
SPAIN	123	134	128	159	169	185
AUSTRALIA	140	151	169	166	193	180
SWEDEN	104	111	118	106	128	147
FRANCE	55	62	74	73	69	94
NETHERLANDS	32	55	66	78	82	93
NEW ZEALAND	60	75	92	89	91	81
NORWAY	45	48	58	57	73	70

Note: Nations sorted by the highest number of first-year international student-athletes in 2020. In 2015, international first-year student-athletes came from 110 nations and independent territories; in 2020, this number rose to 124.

# Top Three Home Countries Among First-Year International Student-Athletes in Division I

Division I Men's Sports							
Soccer	N	Tennis	N	Track	N	Basketball	N
CANADA	49	GERMANY	24	KENYA	23	CANADA	31
UNITED KINGDOM	47	SPAIN	22	CANADA	22	AUSTRALIA	16
GERMANY	33	UNITED KINGDOM	22	UNITED KINGDOM	22	UNITED KINGDOM	9

Division I Women's Sports							
Tennis	N	Soccer	N	Track	N	Golf	N
SPAIN	35	CANADA	94	CANADA	45	SPAIN	17
UNITED KINGDOM	28	UNITED KINGDOM	32	UNITED KINGDOM	30	CANADA	14
FRANCE	17	GERMANY, ICELAND	24	GERMANY	26	THAILAND, UNITED KINGDOM	13

Note: Sports included are the four sports with the highest number of first-year international SA participants. The top three home countries for first-year international SAs in the 2020 APR cohort are listed.

# Percentage Change in the Number of International Student-Athletes in Division I from 2015 to 2020

Division I Men's Sports			
	2015	2020	% change
FOOTBALL	27	82	203%
SOCCER	248	334	35%
CROSS COUNTRY	59	79	34%
BASKETBALL	143	184	29%
BASEBALL	30	38	27%
GOLF	114	144	26%
ICE HOCKEY	127	150	18%
TRACK	177	197	11%
TENNIS	283	304	7%
SWIMMING	92	98	7%
LACROSSE	52	31	-40%

Division I Women's Sports			
	2015	2020	% change
WATER POLO	18	37	106%
BASKETBALL	101	172	70%
TENNIS	204	345	69%
CROSS COUNTRY	66	108	64%
FIELD HOCKEY	73	115	58%
TRACK	172	266	55%
ROWING	74	111	50%
SOCCER	209	284	36%
GOLF	141	186	32%
ICE HOCKEY	73	92	26%
SWIMMING	136	167	23%
VOLLEYBALL	77	94	22%

Note: Sports with >30 first-year international DI student-athletes in 2020. Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

# Change in the Percentage of International Student-Athletes in Division I from 2015 to 2020

## Division I Men's Sports

	2015	2020	% point diff.
SOCCER	26%	37%	11%
TENNIS	54%	63%	9%
TRACK	7%	12%	5%
GOLF	20%	24%	4%
WATER POLO	16%	19%	3%
BASKETBALL	14%	17%	3%
ICE HOCKEY	36%	39%	3%
CROSS COUNTRY	8%	10%	2%
FOOTBALL	1%	2%	1%
SWIMMING	14%	14%	0%
BASEBALL	2%	2%	0%
WRESTLING	0%	0%	0%
VOLLEYBALL	13%	12%	-1%
FENCING	22%	20%	-2%
GYMNASTICS	11%	8%	-3%
LACROSSE	8%	4%	-4%

## Division I Women's Sports

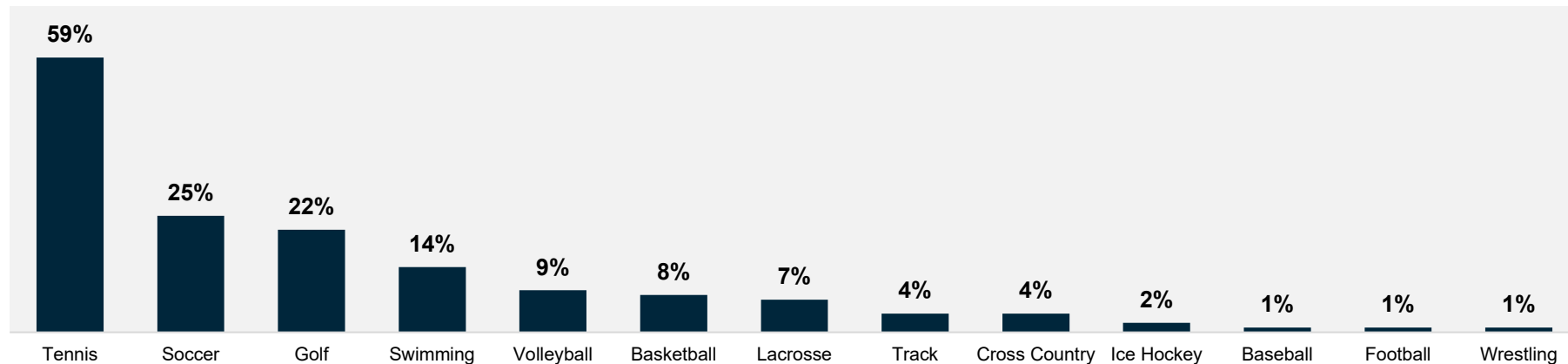
	2015	2020	% point diff.
WATER POLO	15%	24%	9%
BASKETBALL	8%	15%	7%
GOLF	28%	35%	7%
TENNIS	53%	59%	6%
FIELD HOCKEY	21%	27%	6%
BOWLING	3%	9%	6%
CROSS COUNTRY	7%	11%	4%
ICE HOCKEY	40%	44%	4%
FENCING	13%	16%	3%
TRACK	8%	11%	3%
ROWING	13%	16%	3%
SOCCER	10%	12%	2%
SWIMMING	12%	14%	2%
VOLLEYBALL	8%	9%	1%
LACROSSE	2%	3%	1%
SOFTBALL	1%	1%	0%
GYMNASTICS	7%	7%	0%

Note: Graphic is limited to those sports with >200 Division I student-athletes. Data shown are for first-year student-athletes. Figures rounded to the nearest whole number.

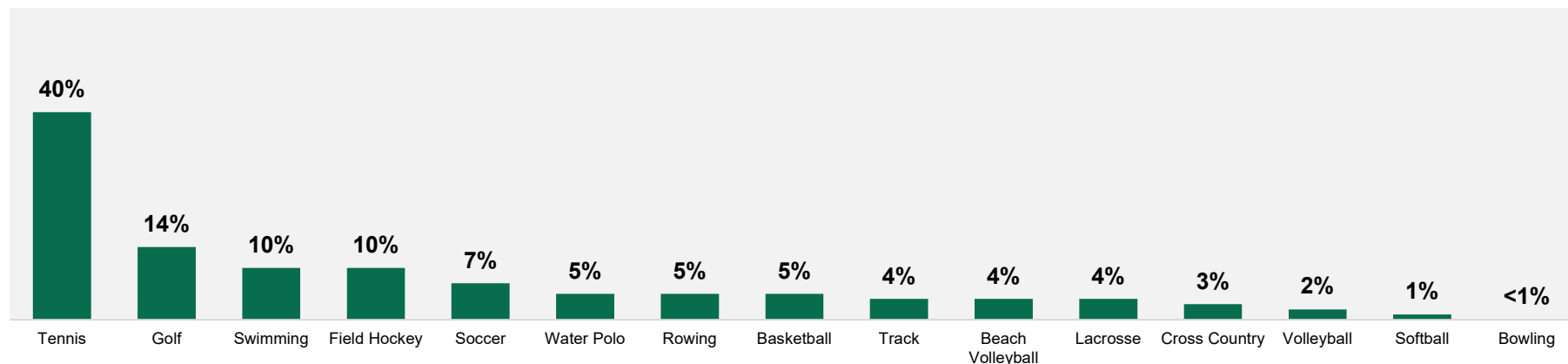
# Division II



## Percentage of International Student-Athletes in Division II Men's Sports

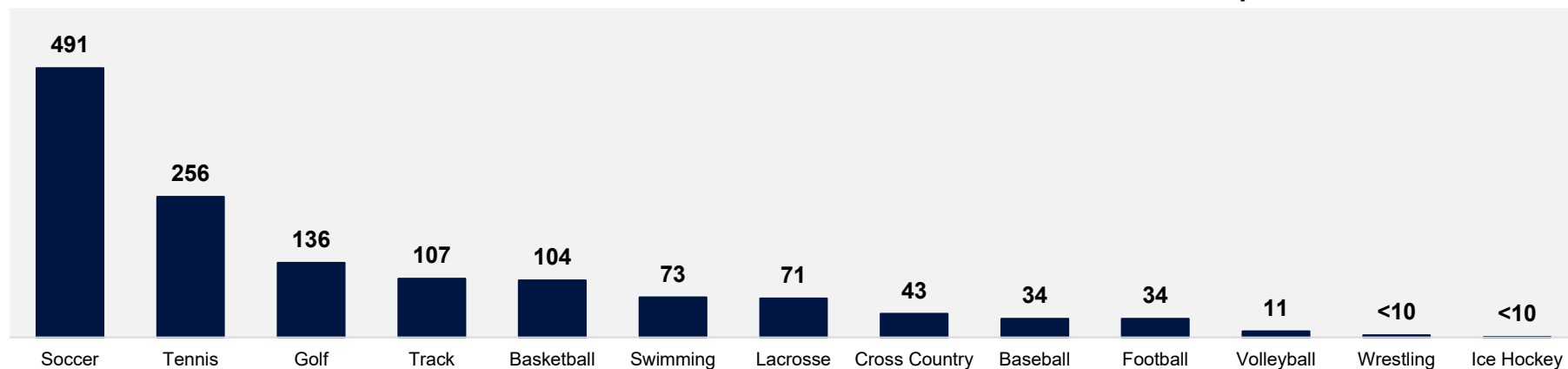


## Percentage of International Student-Athletes in Division II Women's Sports

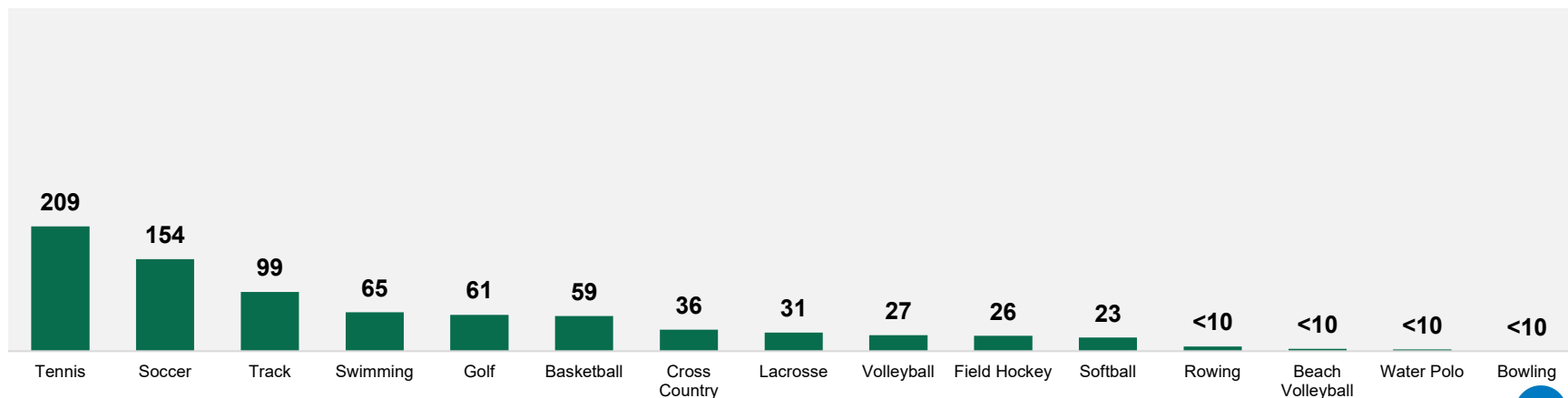


Note: Sports with >200 Division II student-athletes. Data shown are for first-year student-athletes (2020).

## Number of First-Year International Student Athletes in Division II Men's Sports



## Number of First-Year International Student-Athletes in Division II Women's Sports



Note: Sports with >200 Division II student-athletes. Data shown are for first-year student-athletes (2020).



# Top Ten Home Countries by Percentage of First-Year Division II International Student-Athletes

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
CANADA	20.7%	19.9%	17.4%	16.1%	14.3%	15.4%
UNITED KINGDOM	11.3%	11.9%	10.4%	9.2%	10.0%	9.1%
GERMANY	7.2%	6.9%	8.4%	7.3%	8.7%	8.4%
SPAIN	5.9%	6.2%	6.4%	6.4%	6.1%	7.9%
SWEDEN	5.3%	5.3%	4.7%	4.9%	4.1%	4.9%
AUSTRALIA	4.4%	3.7%	3.3%	4.0%	3.5%	4.8%
BRAZIL	4.5%	5.4%	4.7%	4.5%	3.9%	3.0%
NORWAY	1.6%	1.6%	2.3%	2.4%	2.9%	2.7%
FRANCE	2.0%	2.2%	2.3%	2.4%	2.5%	2.6%
NETHERLANDS	0.9%	1.6%	1.5%	2.0%	1.8%	2.0%
SOUTH AFRICA	1.1%	0.8%	0.7%	1.5%	1.5%	2.0%

Note: Nations sorted by the highest (by percentage) representation of first-year international student-athletes in 2020. In 2015, international first-year student-athletes came from 109 nations and independent territories; in 2020, this number rose to 114. One country in the 2015 top 10 did not make the 2020 list: Mexico (2.3% in 2015, 1.8% in 2020).

# Top Ten Home Countries by Number of First-Year Division II International Student-Athletes

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
CANADA	386	359	328	325	315	325
UNITED KINGDOM	210	214	197	186	219	193
GERMANY	134	124	159	147	192	178
SPAIN	109	112	121	129	133	167
SWEDEN	98	96	88	99	91	103
AUSTRALIA	81	66	63	81	76	101
BRAZIL	84	97	88	91	85	63
NORWAY	30	29	44	48	63	57
FRANCE	38	40	43	49	54	55
NETHERLANDS	16	28	29	41	40	43
SOUTH AFRICA	20	14	13	30	34	43

Note: Nations sorted by the highest number of first-year international student-athletes in 2020. In 2015, international first-year student-athletes came from 109 nations and independent territories; in 2020, this number rose to 114. One country in the 2015 top 10 did not make the 2020 list: Mexico (43 in 2015, 38 in 2020).

# Top Three Home Countries Among First-Year International Student-Athletes in Division II

Division II Men's Sports							
Soccer	N	Tennis	N	Golf	N	Track	N
UNITED KINGDOM	93	SPAIN	40	CANADA	25	KENYA	22
GERMANY	57	GERMANY	26	UNITED KINGDOM	21	CANADA	14
SPAIN	50	BRAZIL	23	SWEDEN	14	JAMAICA	9

Division II Women's Sports							
Tennis	N	Soccer	N	Track	N	Swimming	N
GERMANY	22	CANADA	28	JAMAICA	17	GERMANY	7
SPAIN	21	UNITED KINGDOM	27	CANADA	10	CANADA	6
AUSTRALIA	13	SWEDEN	26	KENYA	10	SOUTH AFRICA, POLAND	5

Note: Sports included are the four sports with the highest number of international SA participants. The top three home countries for first-year international SAs in the 2020 APC cohort are listed.

# Percentage Change in the Number of International Student-Athletes in Division II from 2015 to 2020

Division II Men's Sports			
	2015	2020	% change
LACROSSE	55	71	29%
TRACK	89	107	20%
TENNIS	227	256	13%
GOLF	122	136	11%
SOCCER	452	491	9%
BASKETBALL	101	104	3%
BASEBALL	36	34	-6%
SWIMMING	88	73	-17%
FOOTBALL	41	34	-17%
CROSS COUNTRY	62	43	-31%

Division II Women's Sports			
	2015	2020	% change
FIELD HOCKEY	8	26	225%
BASKETBALL	33	59	79%
TRACK	69	99	43%
SOCCER	122	154	26%
TENNIS	170	209	23%
SWIMMING	57	65	14%
GOLF	67	61	-9%
CROSS COUNTRY	47	36	-23%

Note: Sports with >30 first-year international DII student-athletes in 2020. Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

# Change in the Percentage of International Student-Athletes in Division II from 2015 to 2020

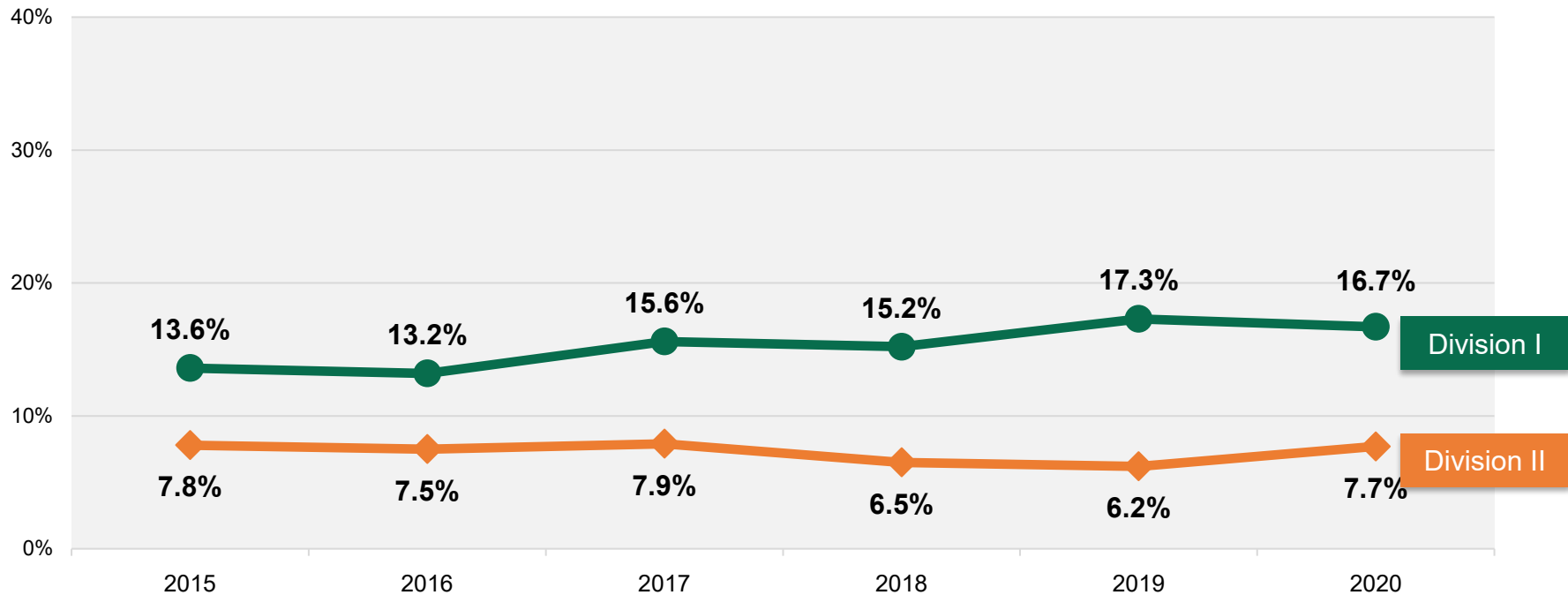
Division II Men's Sports			
	2015	2020	% point diff.
TENNIS	47%	59%	12%
GOLF	19%	22%	3%
SOCCER	24%	25%	1%
VOLLEYBALL	8%	9%	1%
BASKETBALL	8%	8%	0%
LACROSSE	7%	7%	0%
TRACK	4%	4%	0%
BASEBALL	1%	1%	0%
WRESTLING	1%	1%	0%
FOOTBALL	1%	1%	0%
CROSS COUNTRY	6%	4%	-2%
SWIMMING	19%	14%	-5%
ICE HOCKEY	10%	2%	-8%

Division II Women's Sports			
	2015	2020	% point diff.
TENNIS	31%	40%	9%
FIELD HOCKEY	3%	10%	7%
BASKETBALL	3%	5%	2%
LACROSSE	2%	4%	2%
SOCCER	6%	7%	1%
TRACK	3%	4%	1%
ROWING	4%	5%	1%
WATER POLO	5%	5%	0%
SWIMMING	10%	10%	0%
VOLLEYBALL	2%	2%	0%
SOFTBALL	1%	1%	0%
CROSS COUNTRY	4%	3%	-1%
GOLF	16%	14%	-2%
BOWLING	3%	0%	-3%

Note: Graphic is limited to sports with >200 Division II student-athletes. Data shown are for first-year student-athletes. Figures rounded to the nearest whole number.

# Trends by Sport

# Trends in Percentage of International Men's Basketball Student-Athletes



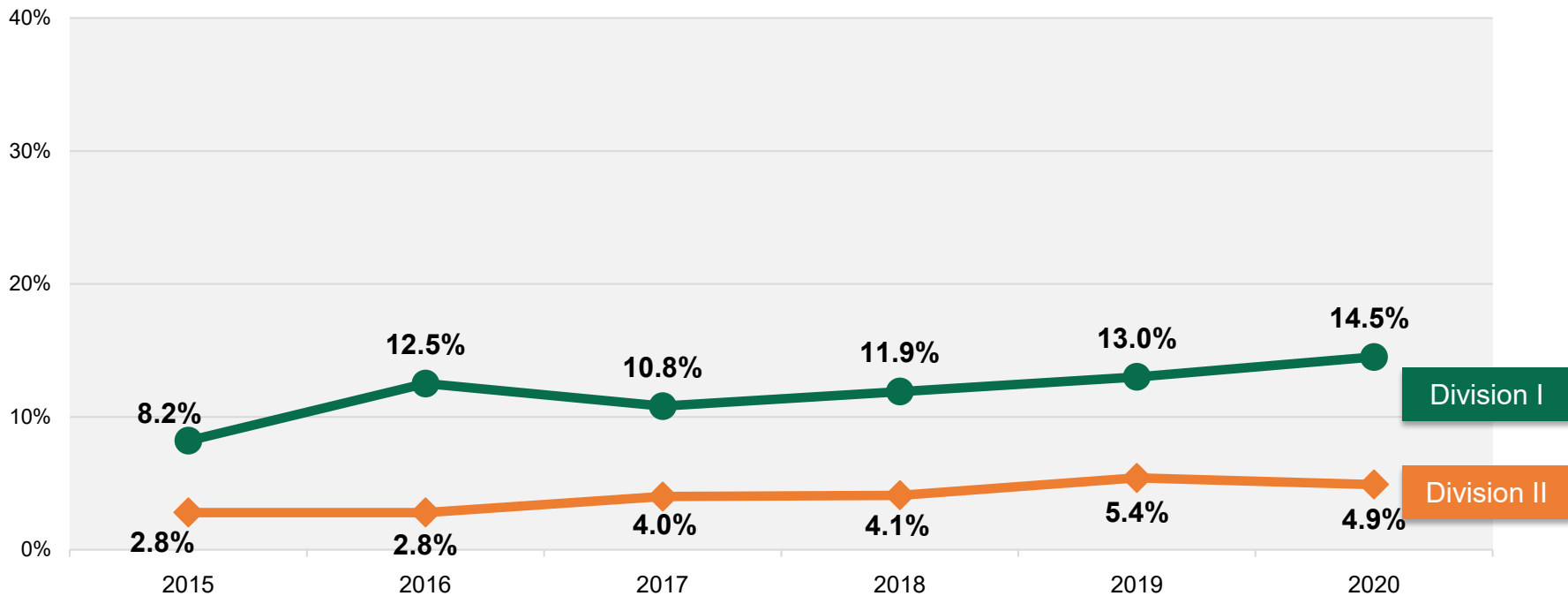
Total Numbers

	2015	2020
DI	143	184
DII	101	104

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.



# Trends in Percentage of International Women's Basketball Student-Athletes

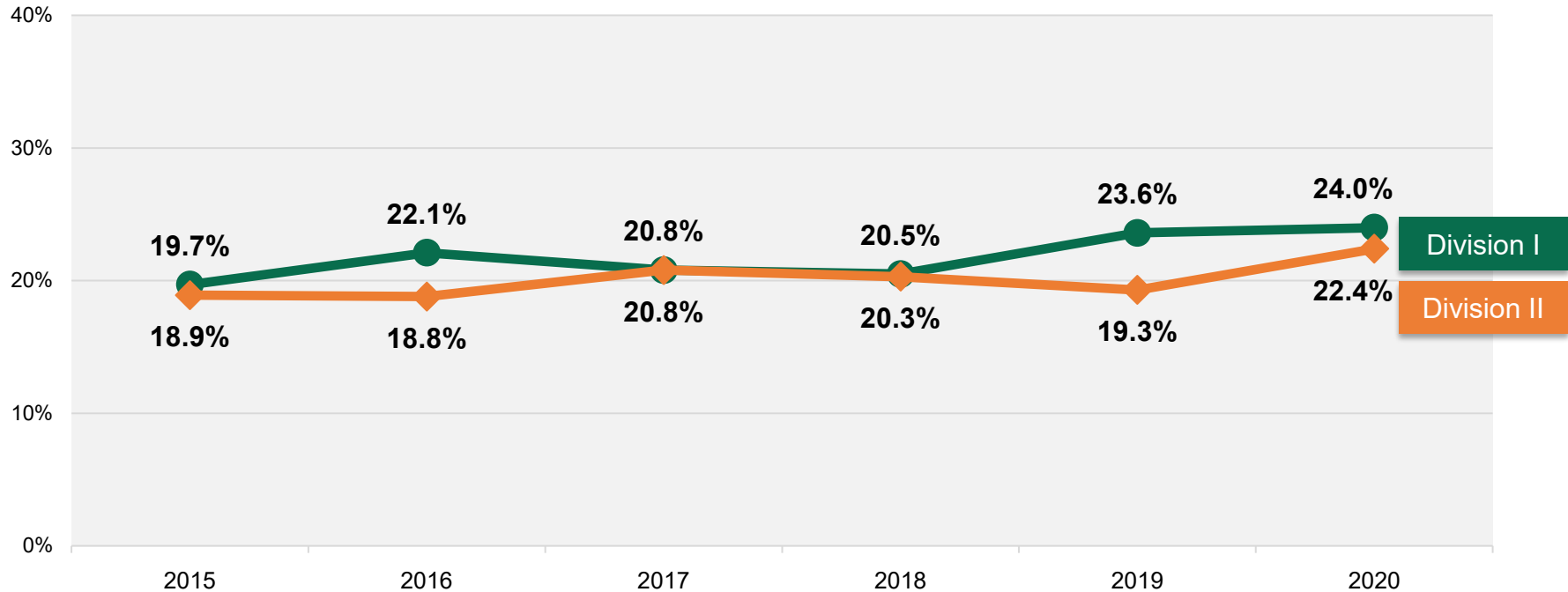


Total Numbers

	2015	2020
DI	101	172
DII	33	59

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

## Trends in Percentage of International Men's Golf Student-Athletes

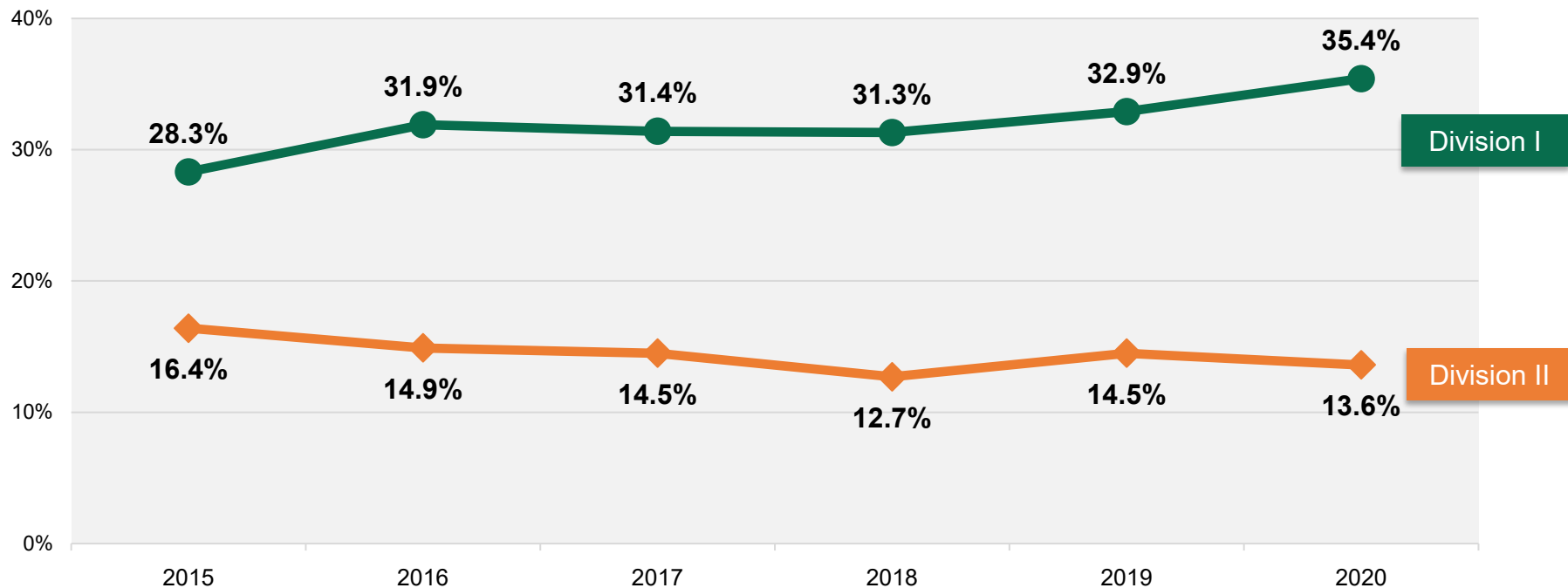


Total Numbers

	2015	2020
DI	114	144
DII	122	136

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

## Trends in Percentage of International Women's Golf Student-Athletes

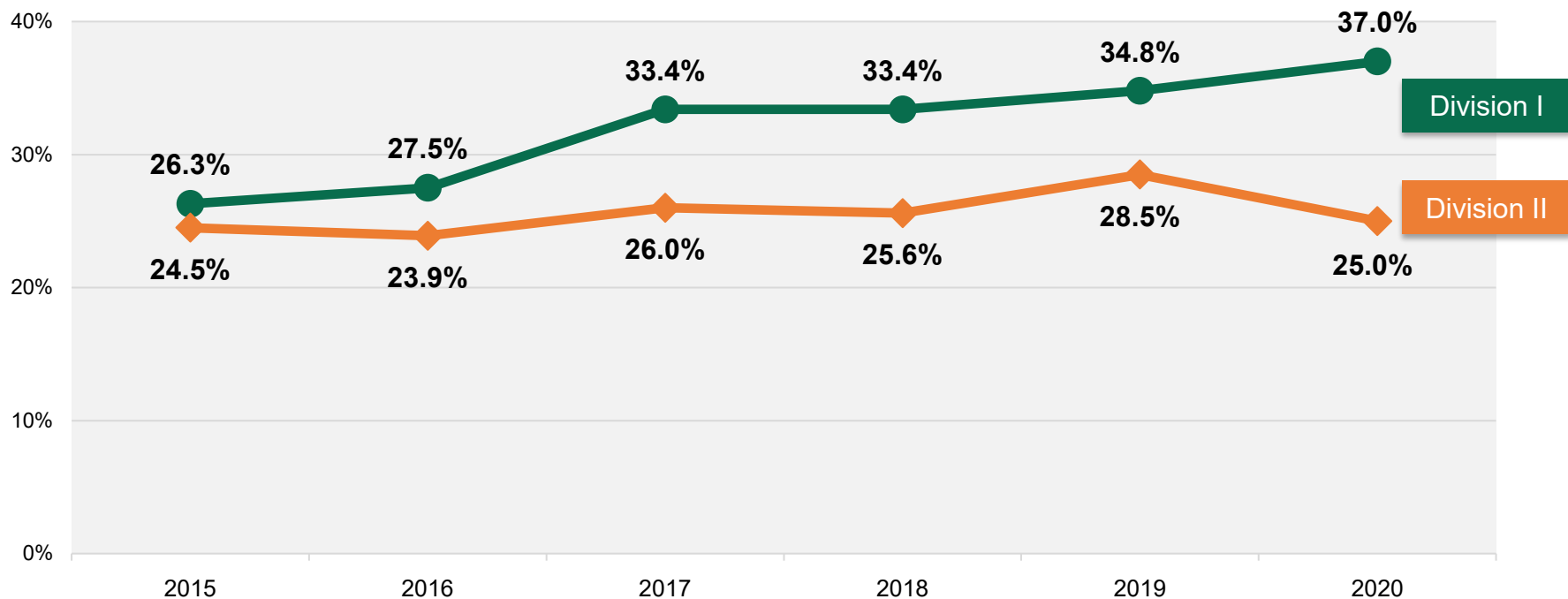


Total Numbers

	2015	2020
DI	141	186
DII	67	61

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

## Trends in Percentage of International Men's Soccer Student-Athletes

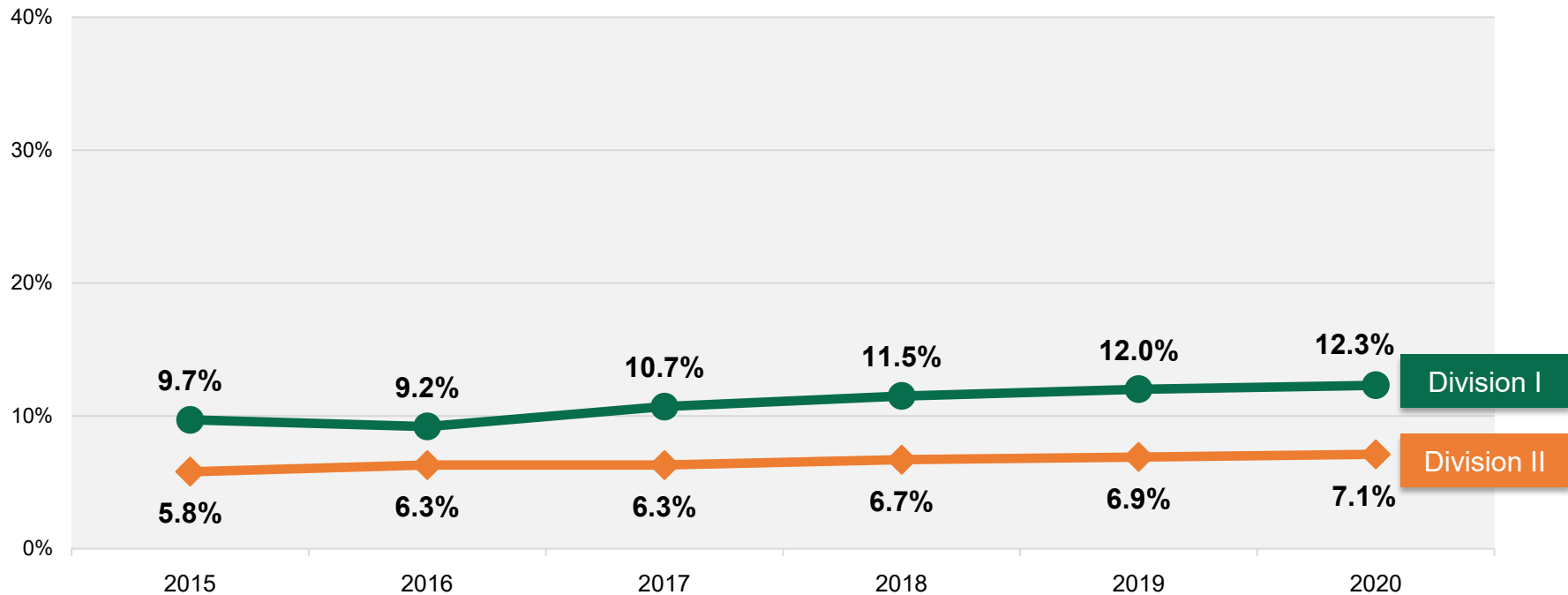


Total Numbers

	2015	2020
DI	248	334
DII	452	491

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

# Trends in Percentage of International Women's Soccer Student-Athletes

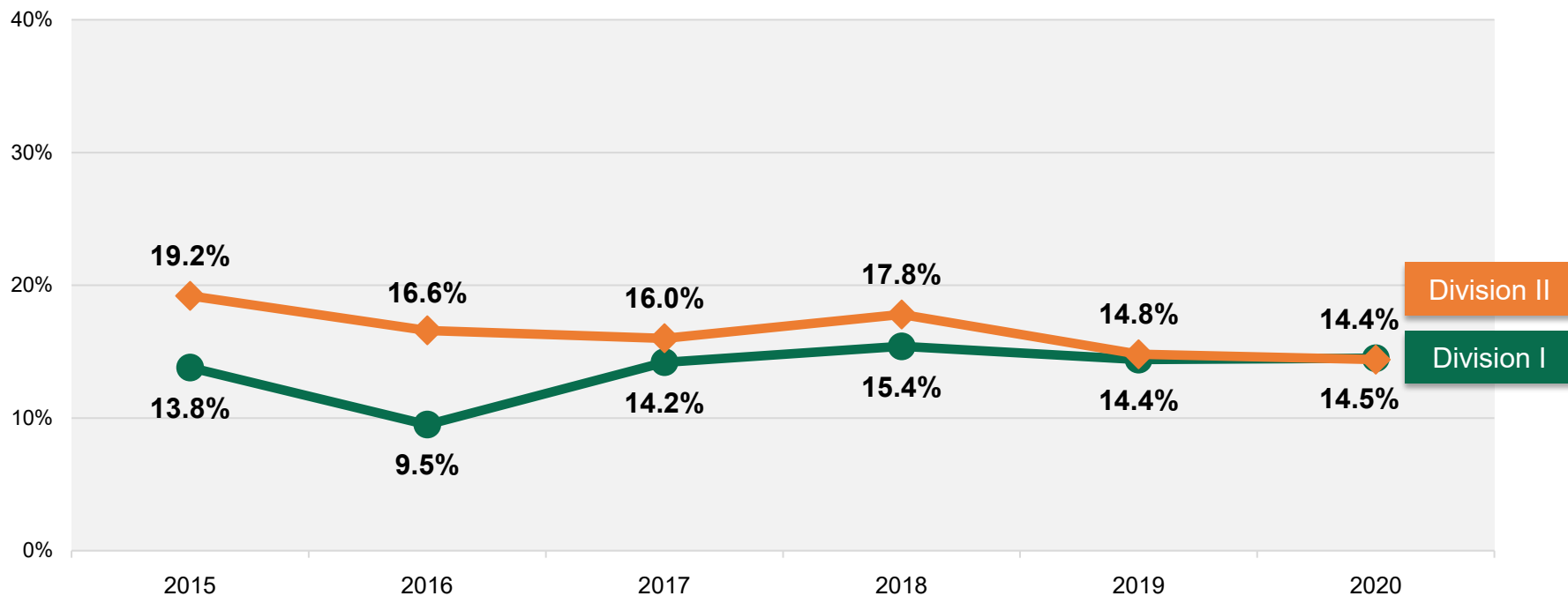


**Total Numbers**

	2015	2020
DI	209	284
DII	122	154

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

# Trends in Percentage of International Men's Swimming & Diving Student-Athletes

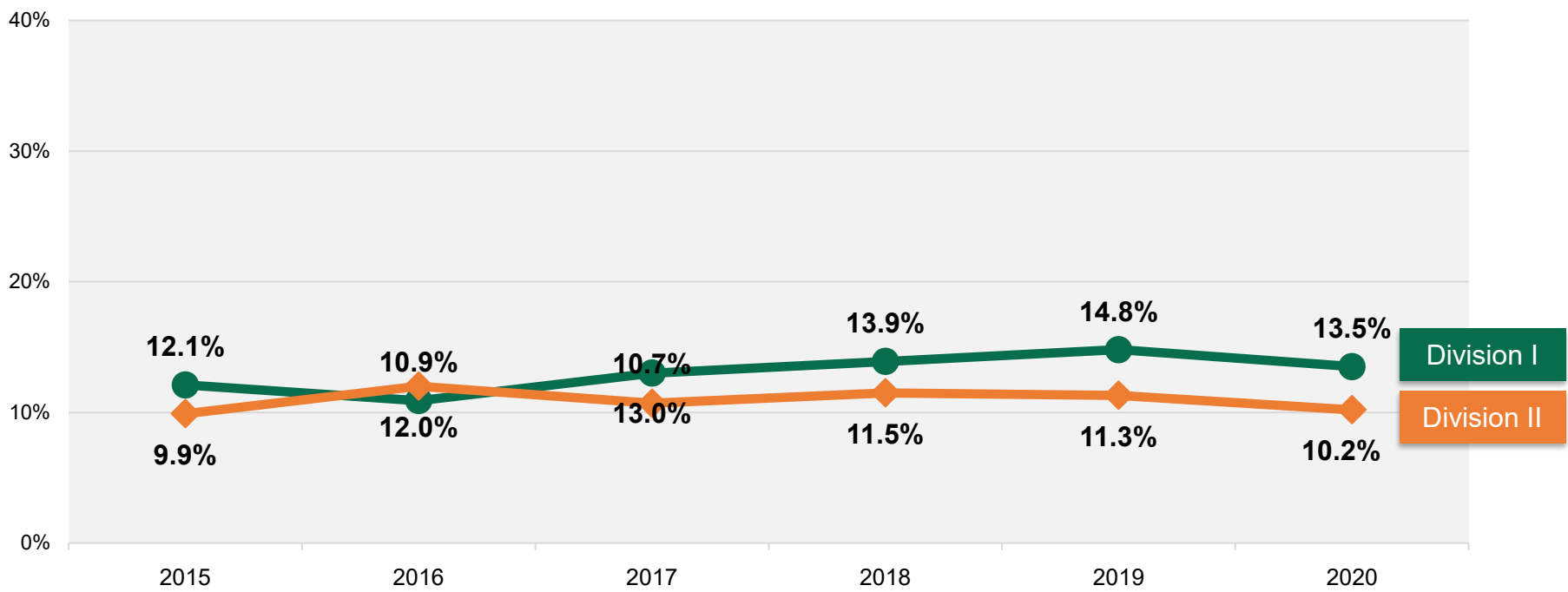


Total Numbers

	2015	2020
DI	92	98
DII	88	73

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

# Trends in Percentage of International Women's Swimming & Diving Student-Athletes



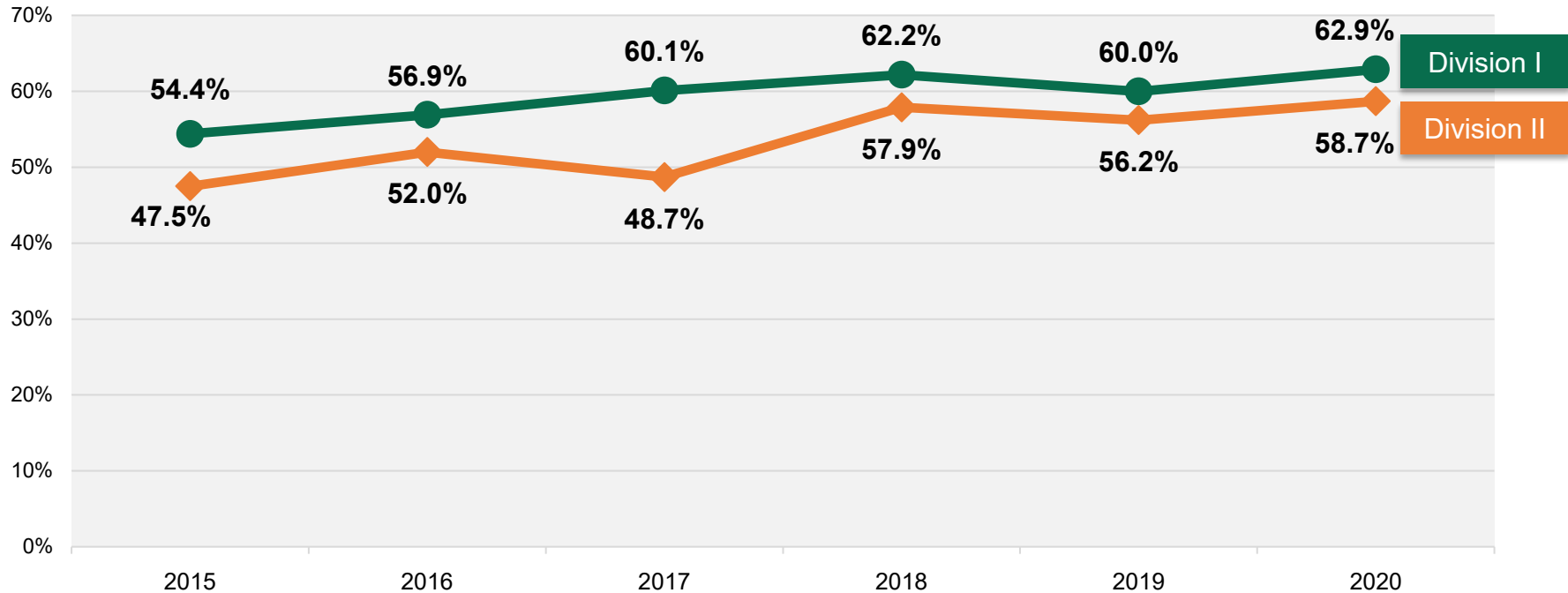
Total Numbers

	2015	2020
DI	136	167
DII	57	65

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.



## Trends in Percentage of International Men's Tennis Student-Athletes

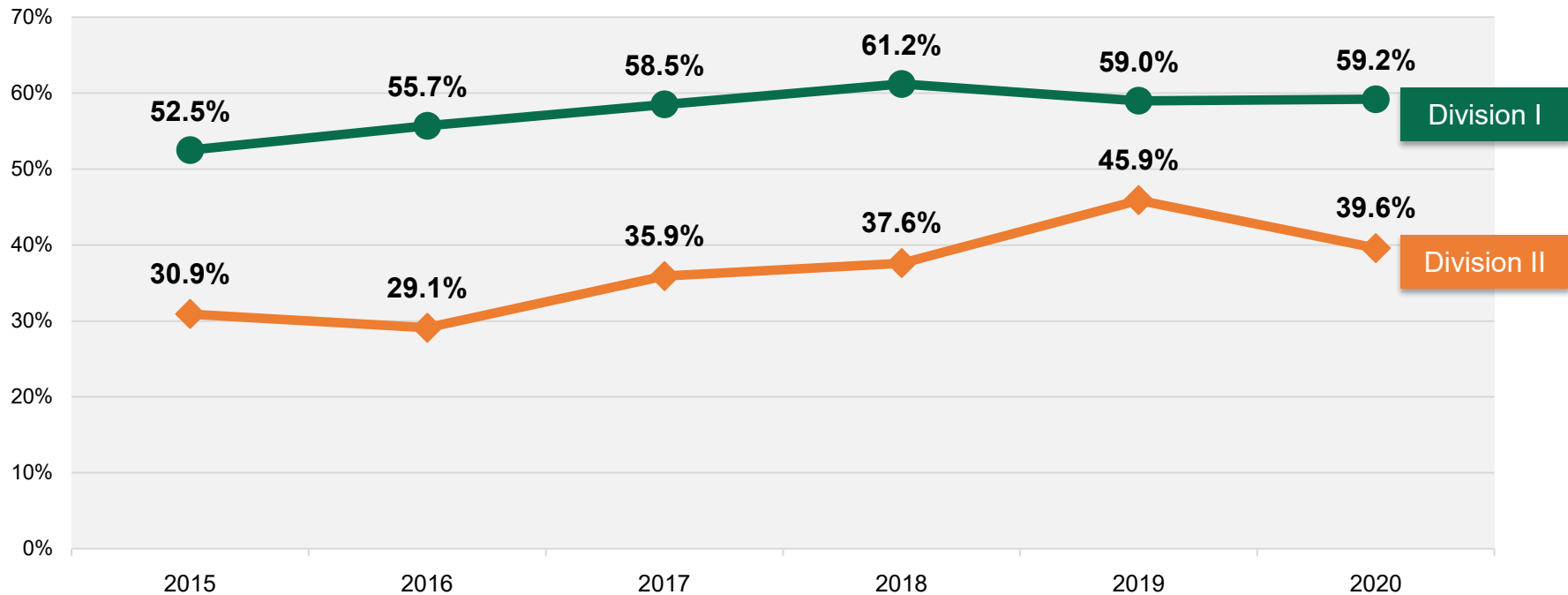


Total Numbers

	2015	2020
DI	283	304
DII	227	256

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

## Trends in Percentage of International Women's Tennis Student-Athletes

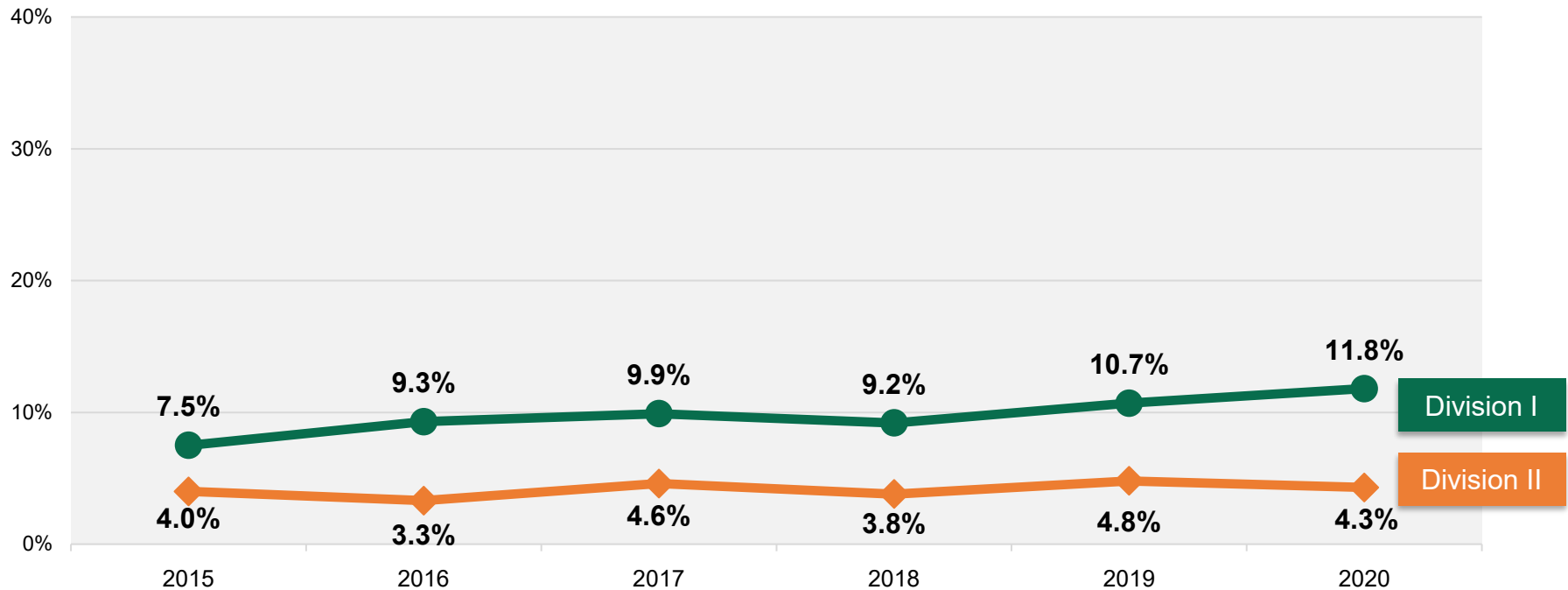


Total Numbers

	2015	2020
DI	304	345
DII	170	209

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

# Trends in Percentage of International Men's Track & Field Student-Athletes

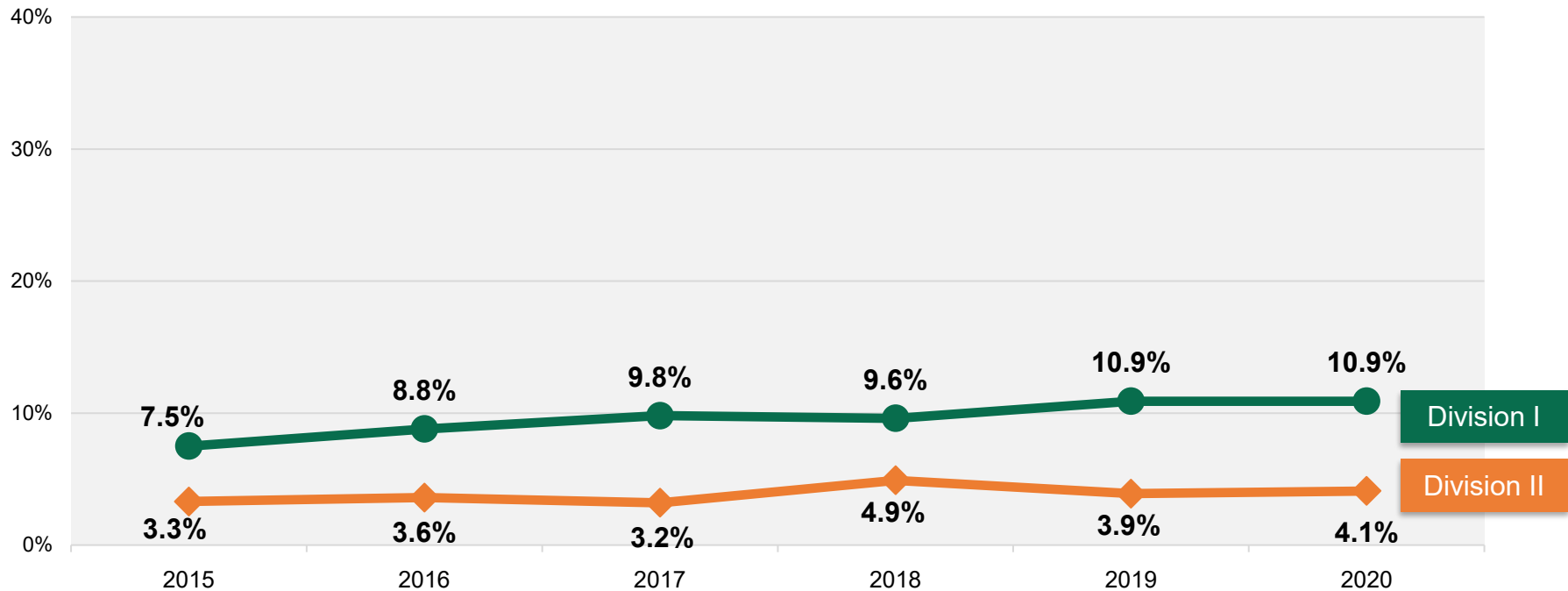


Total Numbers

	2015	2020
DI	117	197
DII	89	107

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

# Trends in Percentage of International Women's Track & Field Student-Athletes



Total Numbers		
	2015	2020
DI	172	266
DII	69	99

Note: Data shown are for first-year student-athletes.

# Detailed Methodology

- ▶ Prospective student-athletes (PSAs) who wish to compete in Division I or Division II must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. All PSAs are assigned a unique NCAA ID number in the process.
- ▶ Home country is captured during registration when PSAs enter their address. Previous country is inputted for PSAs submitting high school transcripts from an additional country. NCAA research determined home country using the country listed in all cases except for PSAs with a U.S. address who also have a non-U.S. previous country in their transcript records. In those cases, home country was set to the previous country. For example, the home country for a PSA residing in the U.S. during senior year of high school who was previously enrolled at a high school in Argentina is Argentina.
- ▶ Matching on NCAA ID, we merged home country with Division I and Division II academic cohort data, which allowed us to examine home country and international status for student-athletes in each sport's cohort. Due to data corrections and the movement of schools or sports in and out of each division, data for each academic cohort is rerun annually, which may result in slight changes to the percentages previously reported.
- ▶ Home country for Division III student-athletes was not included because Division III student-athletes are not required to register with the Eligibility Center. For this population, the only source of international participation is the [NCAA Demographic Database](#).
- ▶ The number and percentage of international student-athletes within the academic data is higher than captured in the NCAA Demographics Database. This may be because of the cohort restrictions (e.g., Division I academic cohorts are typically limited to student-athletes on scholarship) or because international student-athletes' race/ethnicity is entered for them by someone who may assign a racial category other than "nonresident alien," which is one of the race/ethnicity options within the NCAA Demographics Database.



[NCAA.org/research](https://NCAA.org/research)



@NCAAResearch

NCAA is a trademark of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. All other licenses or trademarks are property of their respective holders.



Research