



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

September 2023



RESEARCH

Methodology

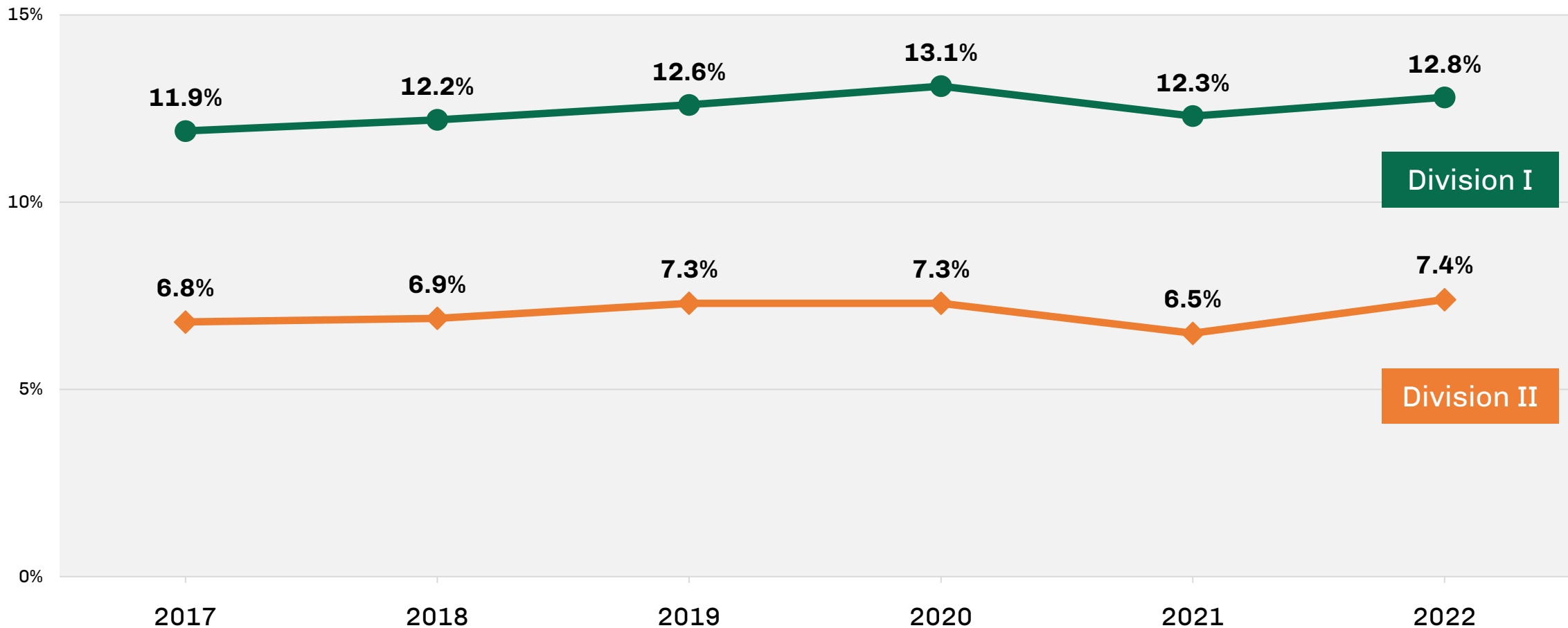
- ▶ Percentages are based on first-year student-athletes (nontransfers) at Division I or II schools. Similar data are not available for Division III.
- ▶ Student-athletes with a non-U.S. home address were categorized as international.
- ▶ Student-athletes from the 50 U.S. states and U.S. territories (Guam, Puerto Rico, etc.) were considered domestic.
- ▶ Data includes all first-year student-athletes who were in the 2022 Division I Academic Progress Rate cohort or in the 2022 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.



Points of Consideration

- ▶ The 2020-21 academic year – listed as “2021” in the charts and tables within this trends report – was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as safety protocols and travel restrictions impacted international student enrollment.
- ▶ Data from the Institute of International Education (IIE) indicated that the number of enrolled international students in the U.S. during 2020-21 dropped to its lowest levels since 2011-12.
- ▶ IIE reported a 15% *decrease* in total enrolled international students from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 within U.S. schools. The IIE reported a 4% *increase* in total enrolled international students from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021 within U.S. schools, a slight rebound.
- ▶ For Fall 2021, U.S. higher education institutions reported a 68% *increase* in the number of new international students enrolling for the first time, a surge from the 46% *decrease* reported in Open Doors for Fall 2020 (Martel, 2021).

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



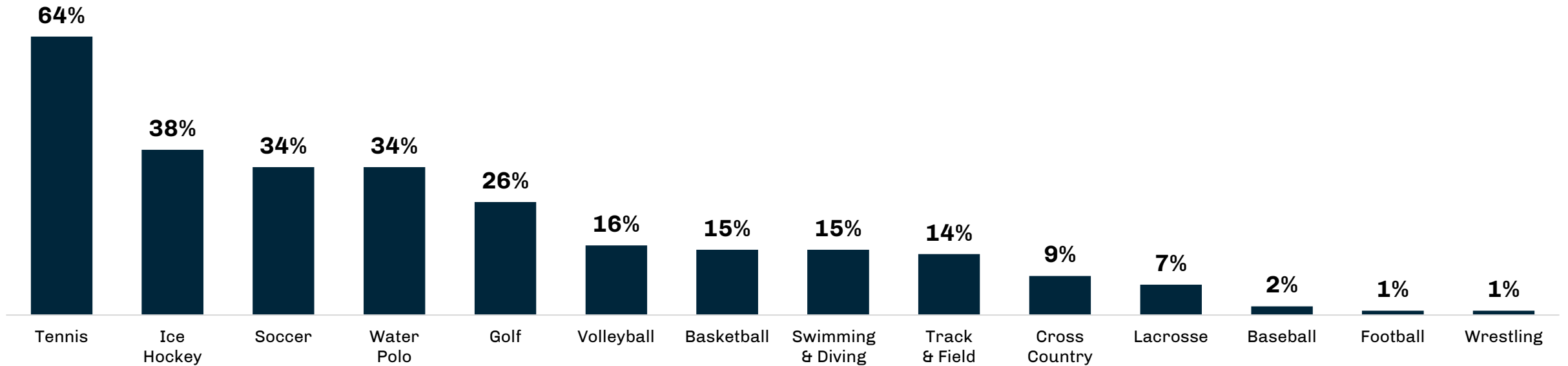
Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	3,174	3,137
DII	1,954	2,052

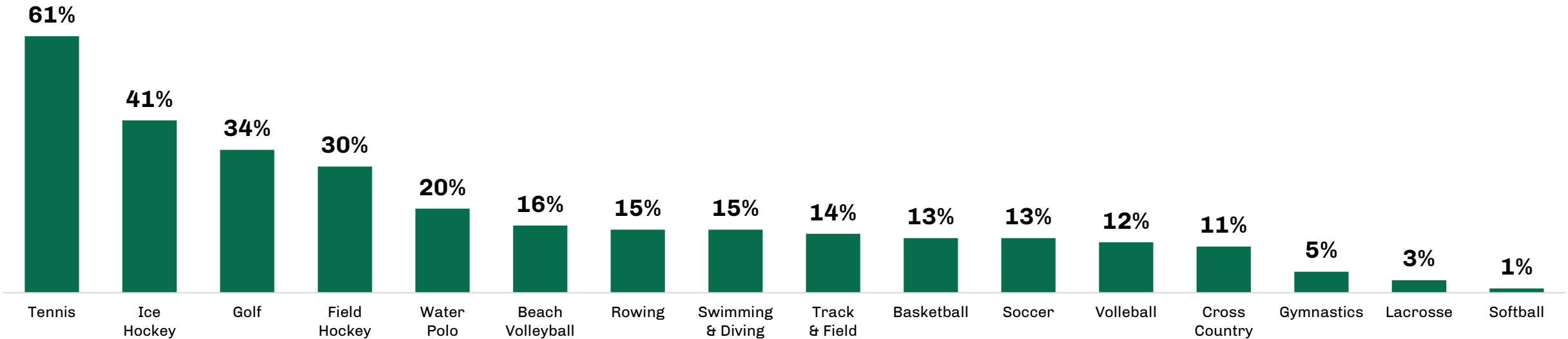
Note: Data shown is for first-year student-athletes.

Division I

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

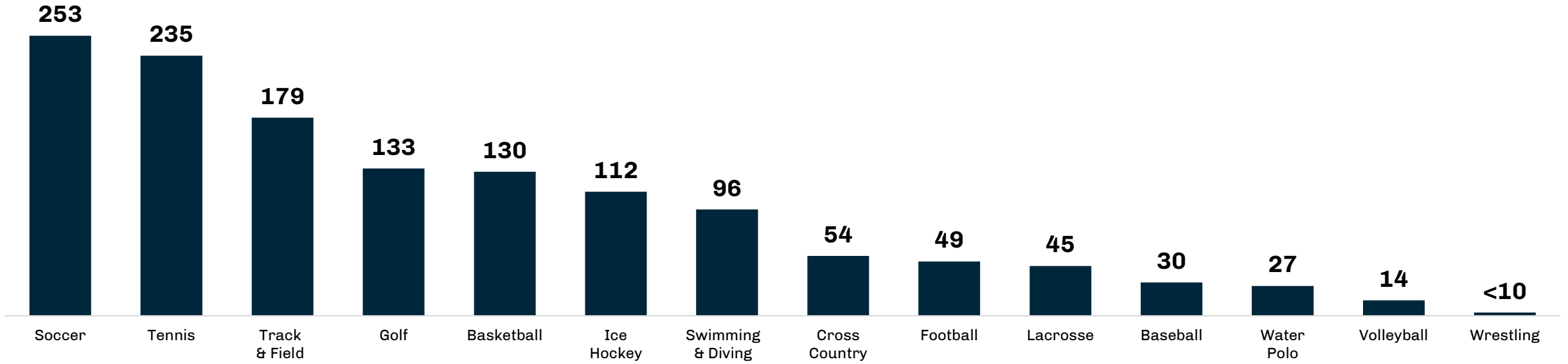


Percentage of International Student-Athletes in Division I Women's Sports

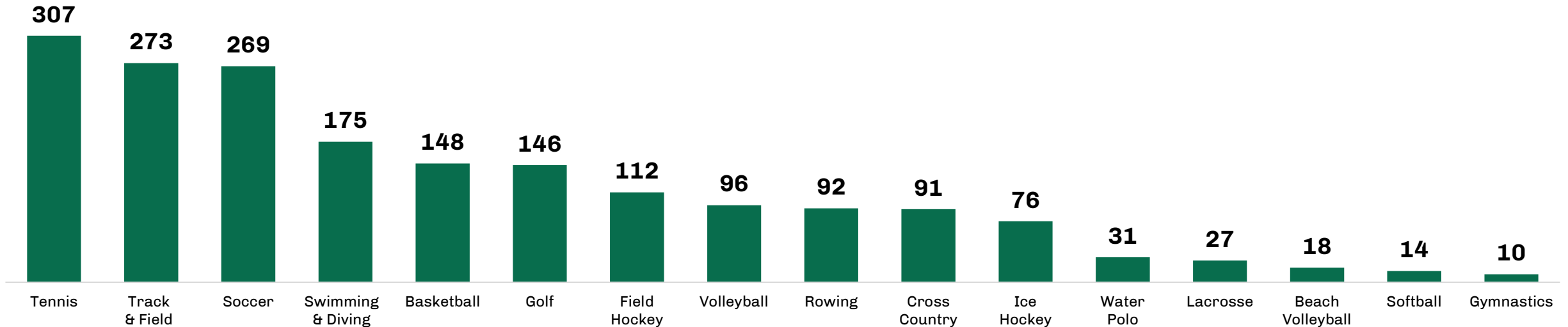


Note: Sports with more than 300 Division I student-athletes. Data shown is for first-year student-athletes (2022).

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 more than 300 Division I student-athletes. Data shown is for first-year student-athletes (2022).

Top 10 Home Countries by Percentage of First-Year Division I International Student-Athletes

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CANADA	23.1%	22.2%	21.5%	21.4%	20.8%	21.9%
UNITED KINGDOM	6.8%	8.4%	7.9%	8.3%	7.5%	6.6%
SPAIN	4.1%	4.8%	4.9%	5.0%	5.7%	5.5%
AUSTRALIA	5.3%	5.0%	5.6%	5.0%	4.9%	4.9%
GERMANY	6.1%	6.0%	5.4%	6.4%	5.6%	4.4%
SWEDEN	3.7%	3.2%	3.6%	4.0%	3.9%	3.3%
ITALY	2.1%	2.2%	1.5%	1.9%	2.0%	2.6%
NETHERLANDS	2.1%	2.3%	2.4%	2.6%	3.0%	2.5%
NEW ZEALAND	2.9%	2.7%	2.6%	2.2%	1.9%	2.1%
FRANCE	2.4%	2.2%	1.9%	2.7%	2.7%	2.0%

Note: Nations sorted by the highest percentage of first-year international student-athletes in 2022. In 2017, international first-year student-athletes came from 122 nations and independent territories; in 2022, this number increased to 123.

Top 10 Home Countries by Number of First-Year Division I International Student-Athletes

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CANADA	733	738	740	775	686	687
UNITED KINGDOM	216	281	273	299	247	208
SPAIN	131	161	167	182	189	172
AUSTRALIA	169	167	192	180	163	154
GERMANY	194	201	184	231	184	138
SWEDEN	118	108	125	146	128	102
ITALY	66	72	53	67	65	81
NETHERLANDS	66	77	82	94	99	78
NEW ZEALAND	91	89	91	80	61	67
FRANCE	76	72	66	96	90	64

Note: Nations sorted by the highest number of first-year international student-athletes in 2022. In 2017, international first-year student-athletes came from 122 nations and independent territories; in 2022, this number increased to 123.

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

Division I Men's Sports							
Soccer	N	Tennis	N	Track & Field	N	Golf	N
CANADA	31	SPAIN	21	JAMAICA	23	CANADA	20
UNITED KINGDOM	25	UNITED KINGDOM	18	CANADA	19	UNITED KINGDOM	13
GERMANY	22	FRANCE	12	UNITED KINGDOM	15	AUSTRALIA, MEXICO, SPAIN	8

Division I Women's Sports							
Tennis	N	Track & Field	N	Soccer	N	Swimming	N
SPAIN	33	CANADA	55	CANADA	93	CANADA	34
UNITED KINGDOM	22	JAMAICA	25	GERMANY, UNITED KINGDOM	22	ITALY	19
GERMANY, RUSSIA	13	AUSTRALIA, GERMANY	16	SWEDEN	19	UNITED KINGDOM	15

Note: Sports included are the four sports with the highest number of first-year international student-athlete participants. The top three home countries for first-year international student-athletes in the 2022 Academic Progress Rate cohort are listed.

Change in the Percentage of International Student-Athletes in Division I from 2017 to 2022

Division I Men's Sports

	2017	2022	% point diff.
VOLLEYBALL	8%	16%	8%
WATER POLO	28%	34%	6%
GOLF	21%	26%	5%
TRACK & FIELD	10%	14%	4%
TENNIS	61%	64%	3%
WRESTLING	0%	1%	1%
ICE HOCKEY	38%	38%	0%
SOCCER	34%	34%	0%
SWIMMING & DIVIING	15%	15%	0%
LACROSSE	7%	7%	0%
BASEBALL	2%	2%	0%
FOOTBALL	1%	1%	0%
BASKETBALL	16%	15%	-1%
CROSS COUNTRY	10%	9%	-1%

Division I Women's Sports

	2017	2022	% point diff.
BEACH VOLLEYBALL	6%	16%	10%
FIELD HOCKEY	25%	30%	5%
WATER POLO	15%	20%	5%
TRACK & FIELD	10%	14%	4%
VOLLEYBALL	8%	12%	4%
BASKETBALL	11%	13%	2%
CROSS COUNTRY	9%	11%	2%
SOCCER	11%	13%	2%
SWIMMING & DIVING	13%	15%	2%
TENNIS	60%	61%	1%
LACROSSE	2%	3%	1%
GOLF	33%	34%	1%
ROWING	15%	15%	0%
ICE HOCKEY	41%	41%	0%
SOFTBALL	1%	1%	0%
GYMNASTICS	13%	5%	-8%

Note: Graphic is limited to sports with more than 300 Division I student-athletes. Data shown is for first-year student-athletes. Figures rounded to the nearest whole number.

Percentage Change in the Number of International Student-Athletes in Division I From 2017 to 2022

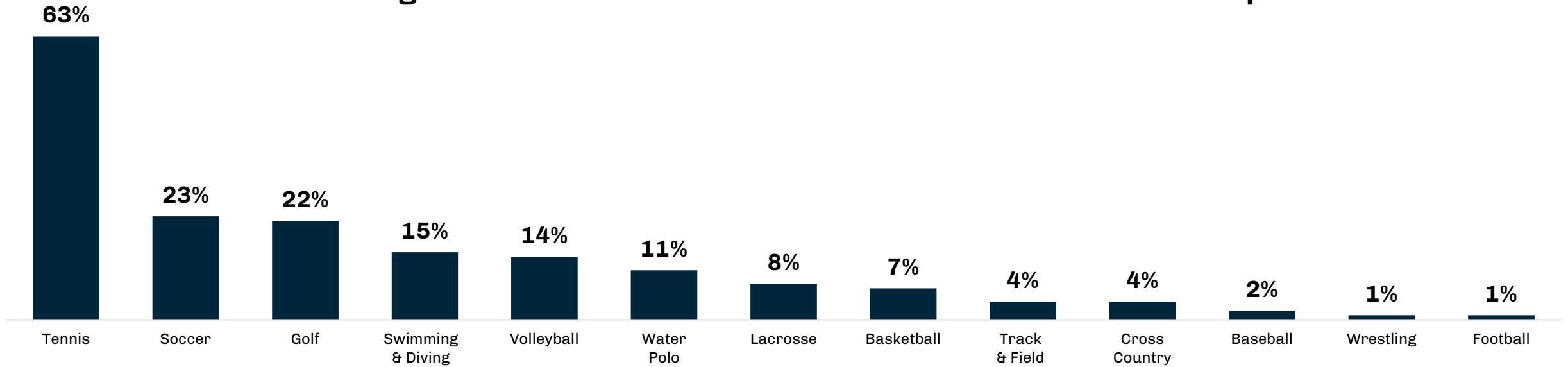
Division I Men's Sports			
	2017	2022	% change
FOOTBALL	41	49	20%
TRACK & FIELD	157	179	14%
LACROSSE	41	45	10%
GOLF	123	133	8%
SWIMMING & DIVING	99	96	-3%
BASEBALL	33	30	-9%
TENNIS	285	235	-18%
SOCCER	311	253	-19%
BASKETBALL	166	130	-22%
ICE HOCKEY	144	112	-22%
CROSS COUNTRY	71	54	-24%

Division I Women's Sports			
	2017	2022	% change
WATER POLO	20	31	55%
VOLLEYBALL	79	96	22%
TRACK & FIELD	234	273	17%
SOCCER	232	269	16%
FIELD HOCKEY	98	112	14%
SWIMMING & DIVING	157	175	11%
BASKETBALL	135	148	10%
ROWING	90	92	2%
ICE HOCKEY	76	76	0%
CROSS COUNTRY	93	91	-2%
GOLF	157	146	-7%
TENNIS	365	307	-16%

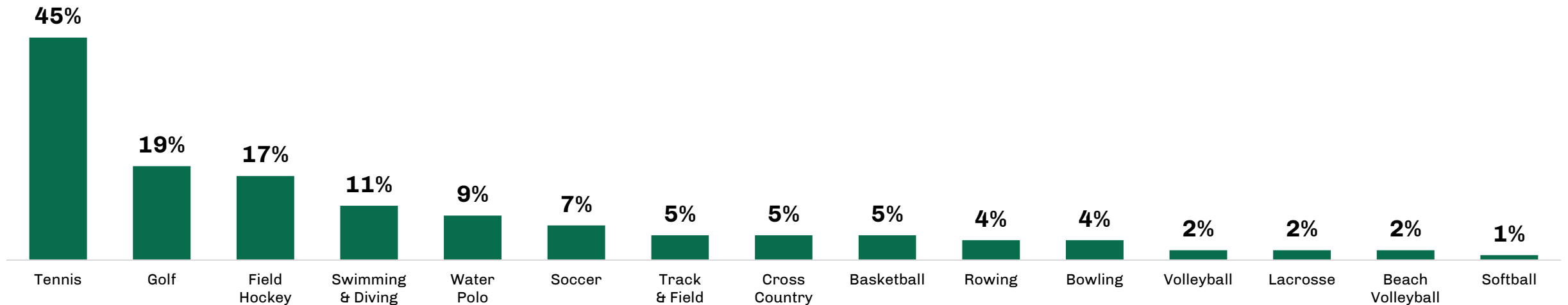
Note: Sports with more than 30 first-year international Division I student-athletes in 2022. Data shown is for first-year student-athletes.

Division II

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

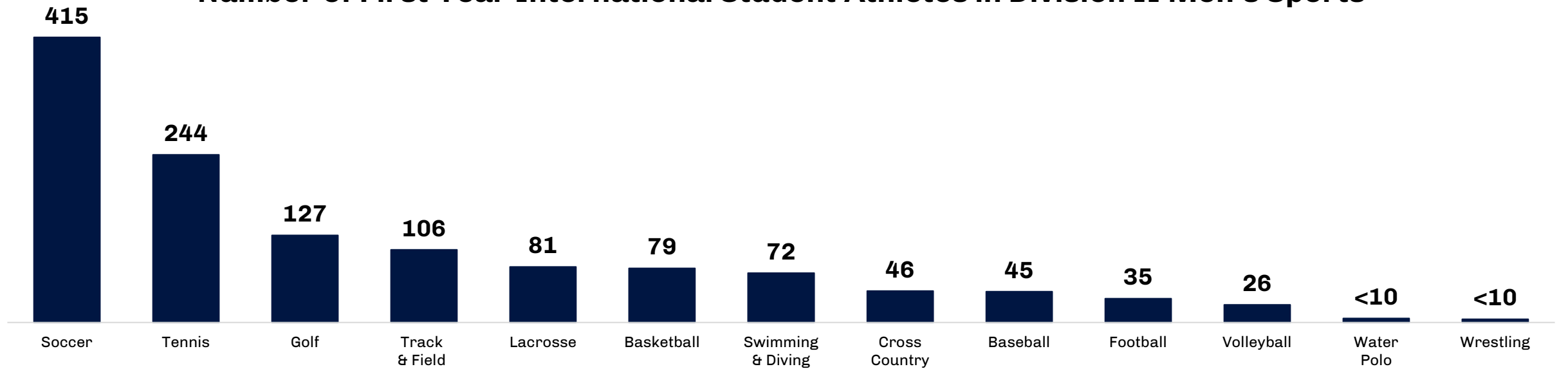


Percentage of International Student-Athletes in Division II Women's Sports

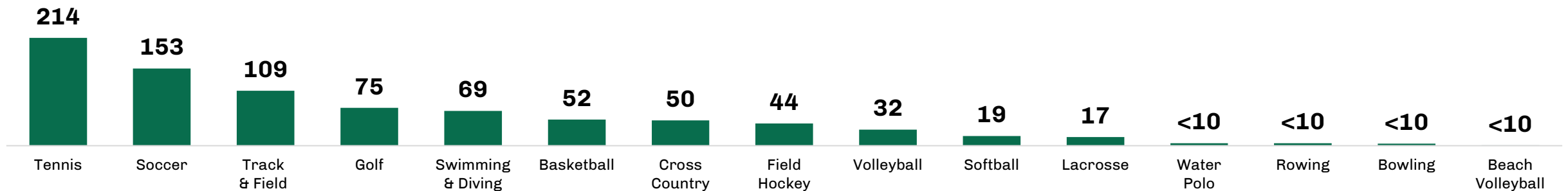


Note: Sports with more than 200 Division II student-athletes. Data shown is for first-year student-athletes (2022).

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 more than 200 Division II student-athletes. Data shown is for first-year student-athletes (2022).

Top 10 Home Countries by Percentage of First-Year Division II International Student-Athletes

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CANADA	17.5%	16.1%	14.4%	14.9%	17.1%	15.2%
UNITED KINGDOM	10.3%	9.2%	9.8%	8.9%	9.3%	6.6%
GERMANY	8.2%	7.3%	8.7%	8.3%	8.3%	5.8%
SPAIN	6.2%	6.3%	6.1%	7.8%	5.9%	5.3%
SWEDEN	4.6%	4.9%	4.1%	4.8%	5.7%	4.8%
BRAZIL	4.7%	4.5%	3.8%	3.0%	2.5%	3.7%
AUSTRALIA	3.2%	4.0%	3.4%	4.6%	3.5%	3.0%
ITALY	2.3%	2.2%	2.2%	1.6%	2.0%	2.7%
NETHERLANDS	1.5%	2.0%	1.8%	2.0%	1.6%	2.6%
MEXICO	2.4%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	2.5%	2.6%

Note: Nations sorted by the highest percentage of first-year international student-athletes in 2022. In 2017, international first-year student-athletes came from 114 nations and independent territories; in 2022, this number increased to 126. Two countries in the 2017 top 10 did not make the 2022 list: France (2.3% in 2017, 2.5% in 2022) and Norway (2.3% in 2017, 1.3% in 2022).

Top 10 Home Countries by Number of First-Year Division II International Student-Athletes

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CANADA	342	328	318	321	313	311
UNITED KINGDOM	202	187	216	191	171	136
GERMANY	161	149	192	179	151	119
SPAIN	121	129	134	168	108	108
SWEDEN	89	99	90	104	104	99
BRAZIL	91	91	85	64	45	75
AUSTRALIA	63	82	75	100	64	62
ITALY	44	45	49	35	37	56
NETHERLANDS	30	41	40	43	30	54
MEXICO	46	39	41	42	46	53

Note: Nations sorted by the highest number of first-year international student-athletes in 2022. In 2017, international first-year student-athletes came from 114 nations and independent territories; in 2022, this number increased to 126. Two countries in the 2017 top 10 did not make the 2022 list: France (45 in 2017, 51 in 2022) and Norway (44 in 2017, 27 in 2022).

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 & Field	N
UNITED KINGDOM	48	GERMANY, SPAIN	28	CANADA	19	UNITED KINGDOM	13
BRAZIL	28	FRANCE	13	SWEDEN	16	JAMAICA	11
SWEDEN	27	CANADA, ITALY	12	UNITED KINGDOM	13	CANADA	10

Division II Women's Sports							
Tennis	N	Soccer	N	Track & Field	N	Golf	N
SPAIN	19	CANADA	24	JAMAICA	20	SWEDEN	10
INDIA	13	SWEDEN, UNITED KINGDOM	18	CANADA	12	MEXICO	8
GERMANY	11	GERMANY	10	KENYA	9	COLOMBIA, UNITED KINGDOM	7

Note: Sports included are the four sports with the highest number of international student-athlete participants. The top three home countries for first-year international student-athletes in the 2022 Academic Performance Census cohort are listed.

Change in the Percentage of International Student-Athletes in Division II from 2017 to 2022

Division II Men's Sports			
	2017	2022	% point diff.
TENNIS	50%	63%	13%
VOLLEYBALL	7%	14%	7%
WATER POLO	6%	11%	5%
LACROSSE	6%	8%	2%
BASEBALL	1%	2%	1%
GOLF	21%	22%	1%
FOOTBALL	1%	1%	0%
WRESTLING	1%	1%	0%
BASKETBALL	8%	7%	-1%
CROSS COUNTRY	5%	4%	-1%
SWIMMING & DIVING	16%	15%	-1%
TRACK & FIELD	5%	4%	-1%
SOCCER	27%	23%	-4%

Division II Women's Sports			
	2017	2022	% point diff.
FIELD HOCKEY	8%	17%	9%
TENNIS	36%	45%	9%
WATER POLO	4%	9%	5%
GOLF	16%	19%	3%
BOWLING	1%	4%	3%
TRACK & FIELD	3%	5%	2%
BASKETBALL	4%	5%	1%
CROSS COUNTRY	4%	5%	1%
SOCCER	6%	7%	1%
LACROSSE	2%	2%	0%
SOFTBALL	1%	1%	0%
SWIMMING & DIVING	11%	11%	0%
VOLLEYBALL	2%	2%	0%
BEACH VOLLEYBALL	3%	2%	-1%
ROWING	6%	4%	-2%

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

Percentage Change in the Number of International Student-Athletes in Division II From 2017 to 2022

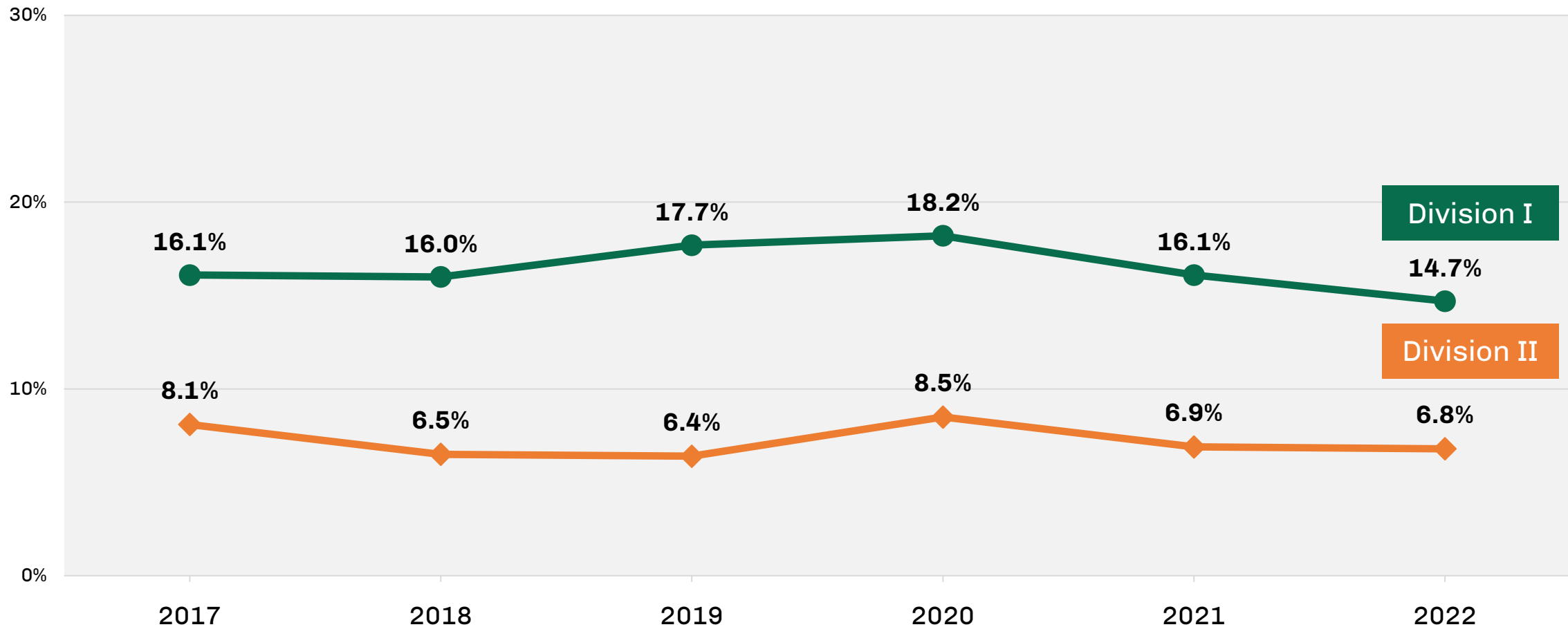
Division II Men's Sports			
	2017	2022	% change
VOLLEYBALL	6	26	333%
LACROSSE	49	81	65%
TENNIS	186	244	31%
BASEBALL	35	45	29%
SWIMMING & DIVING	72	72	0%
TRACK & FIELD	109	106	-3%
GOLF	128	127	-1%
SOCCER	479	415	-13%
CROSS COUNTRY	54	46	-15%
BASKETBALL	102	79	-23%
FOOTBALL	54	35	-35%

Division II Women's Sports			
	2017	2022	% change
FIELD HOCKEY	22	44	100%
TRACK & FIELD	77	109	42%
VOLLEYBALL	25	32	28%
TENNIS	185	214	16%
CROSS COUNTRY	45	50	11%
GOLF	68	75	10%
SOCCER	143	153	7%
BASKETBALL	49	52	6%
SWIMMING & DIVING	67	69	3%

Note: Sports with more than 25 first-year international Division II student-athletes in 2022. Data shown is for first-year student-athletes.

Trends by Sport

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

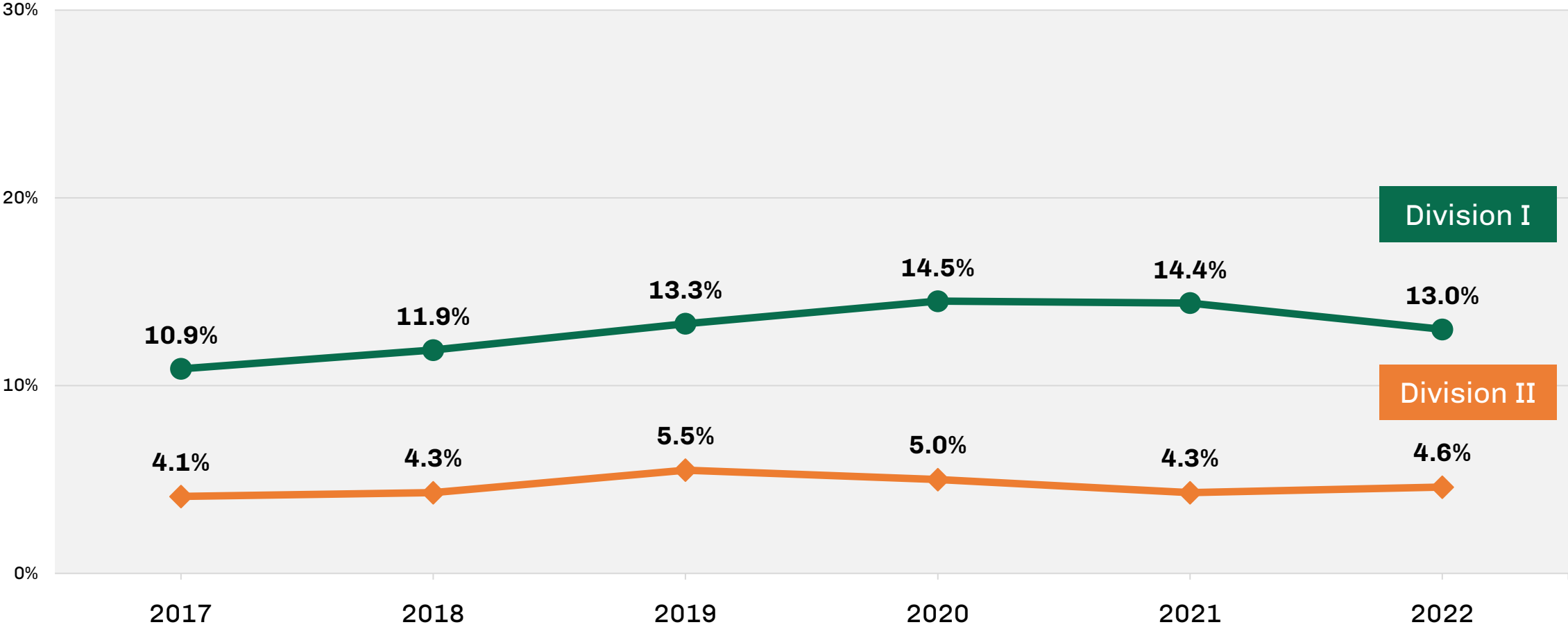


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	163	130
DII	102	79

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

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

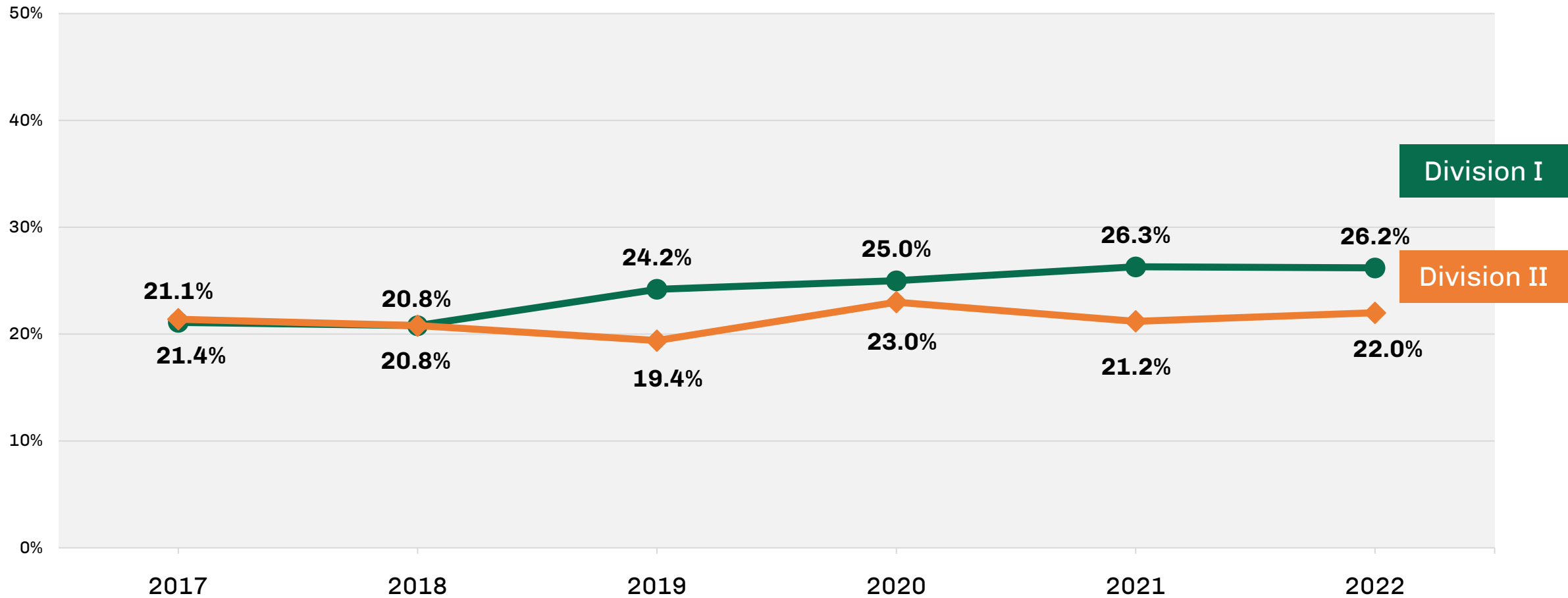


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	135	148
DII	49	52

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

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

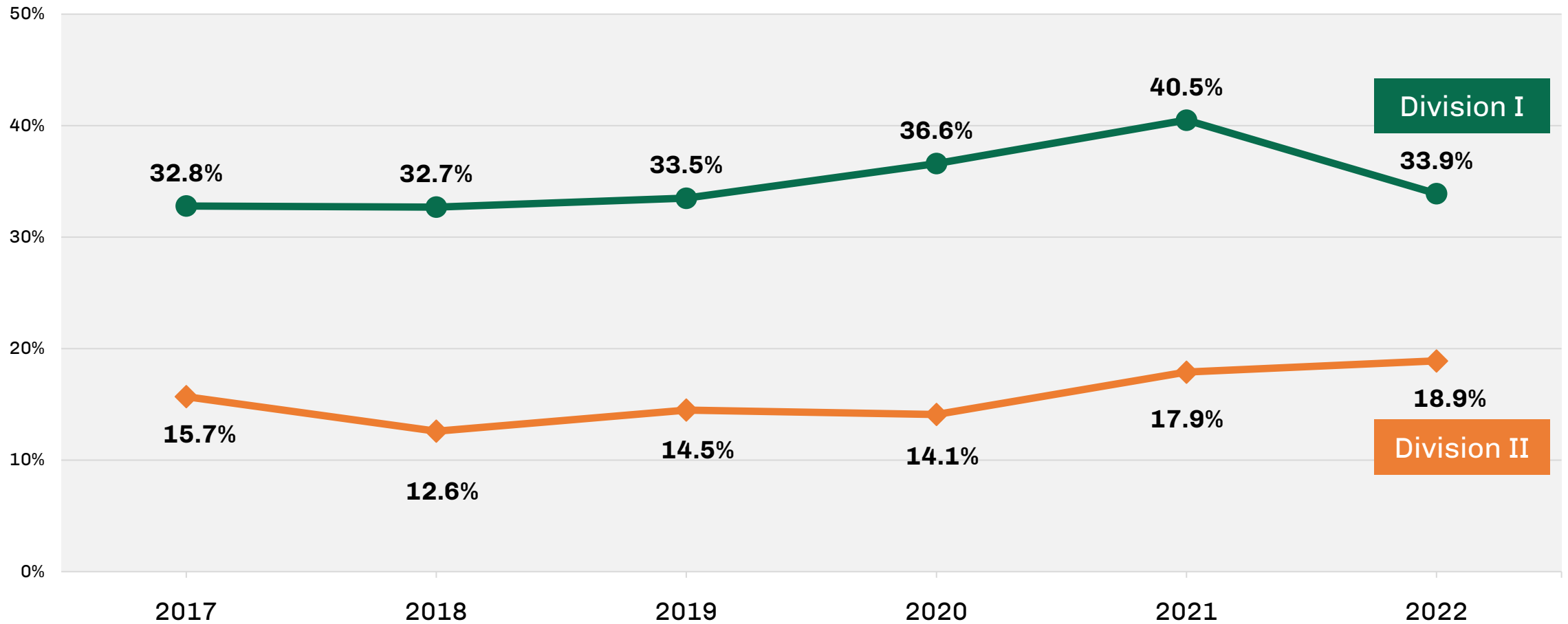


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	122	133
DII	128	127

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

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

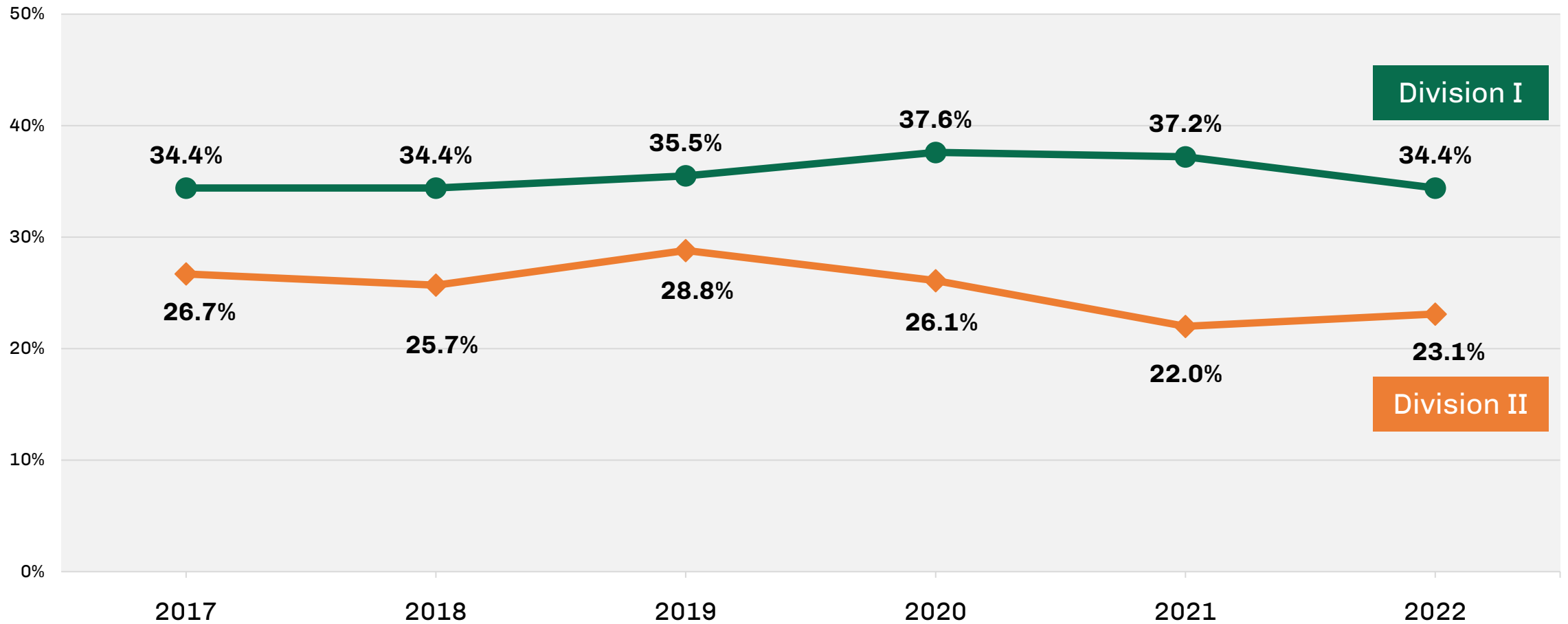


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	157	146
DII	68	75

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

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

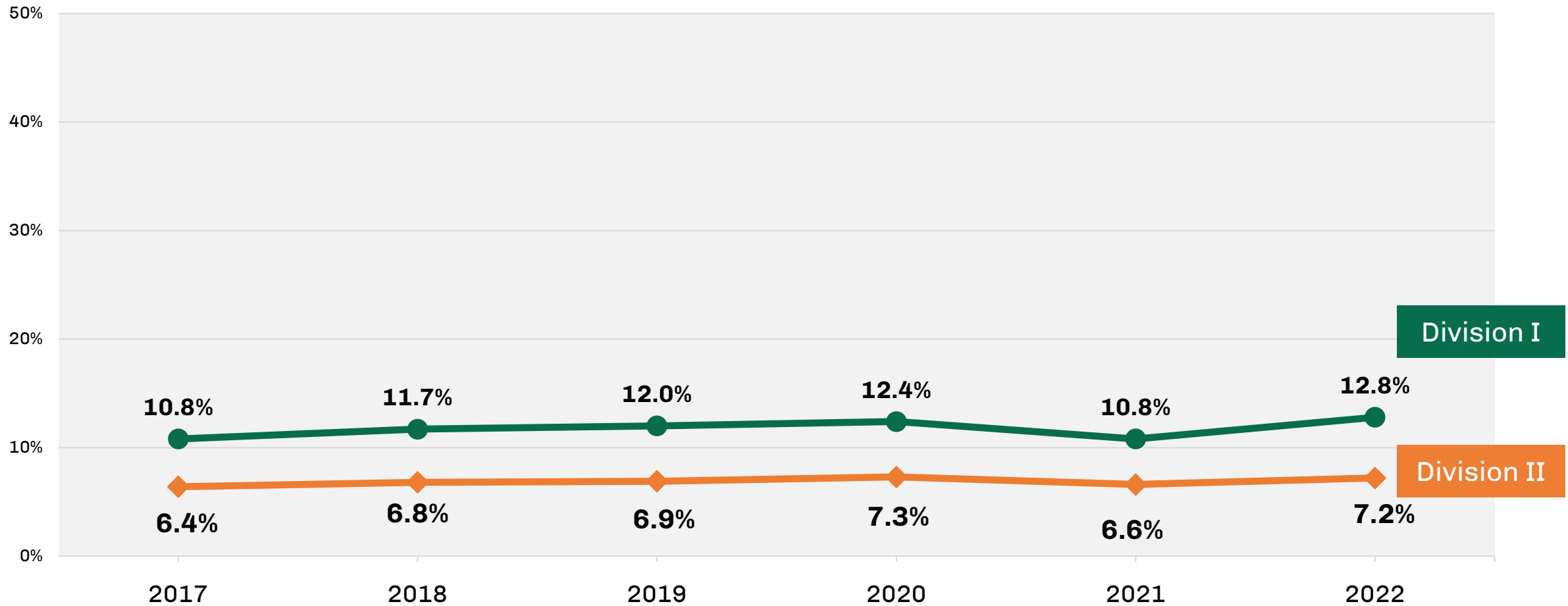


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	307	253
DII	479	415

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

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

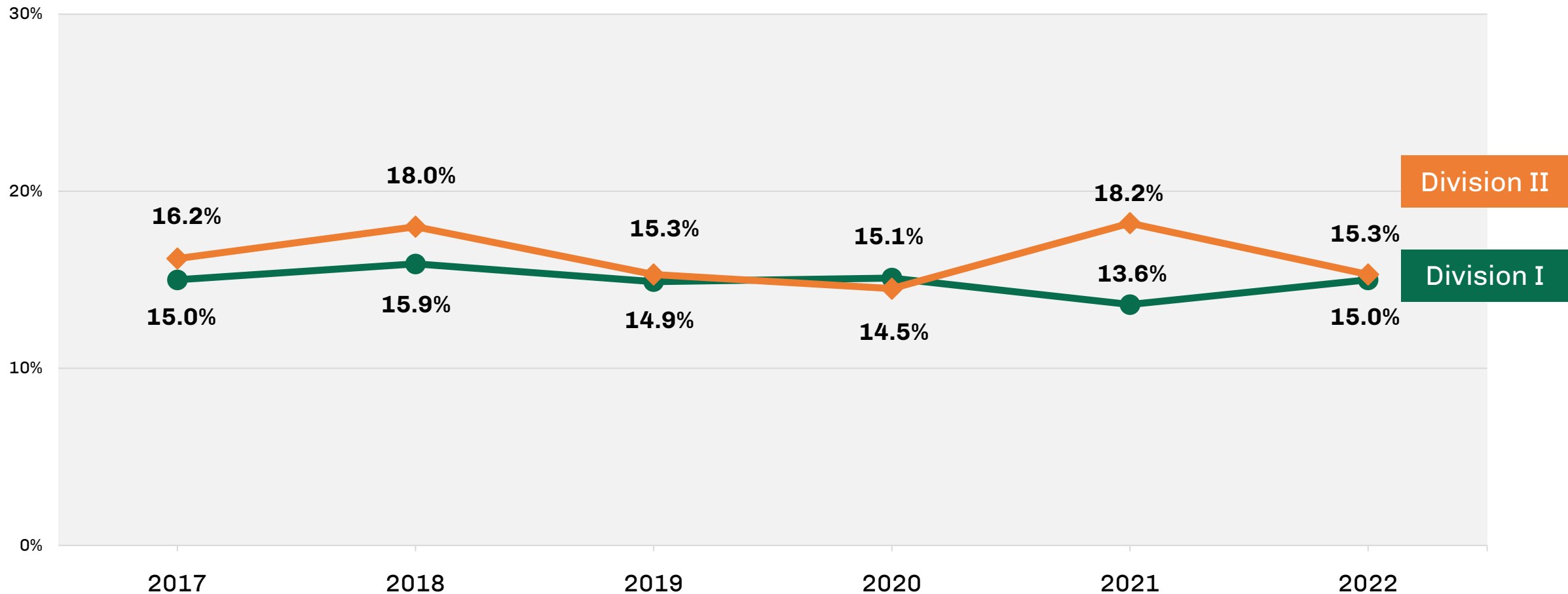


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	230	269
DII	143	153

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

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

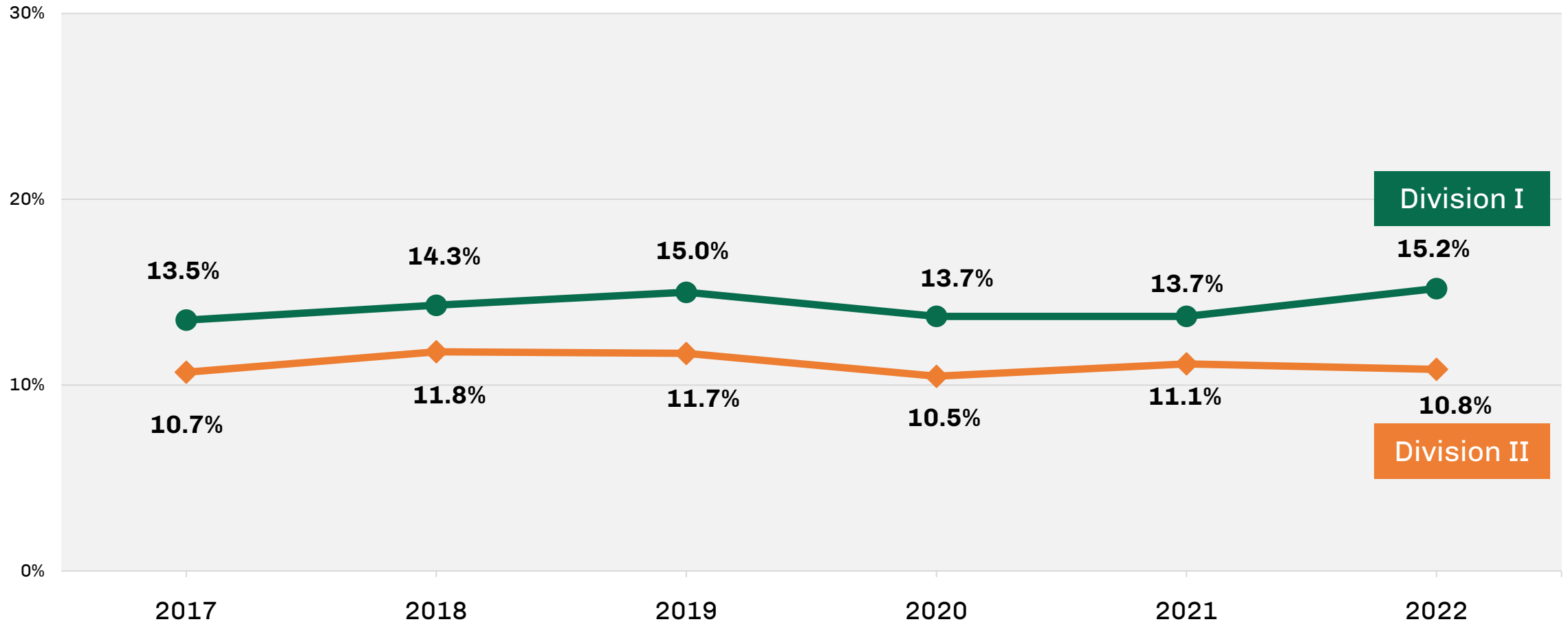


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	98	96
DII	72	72

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

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

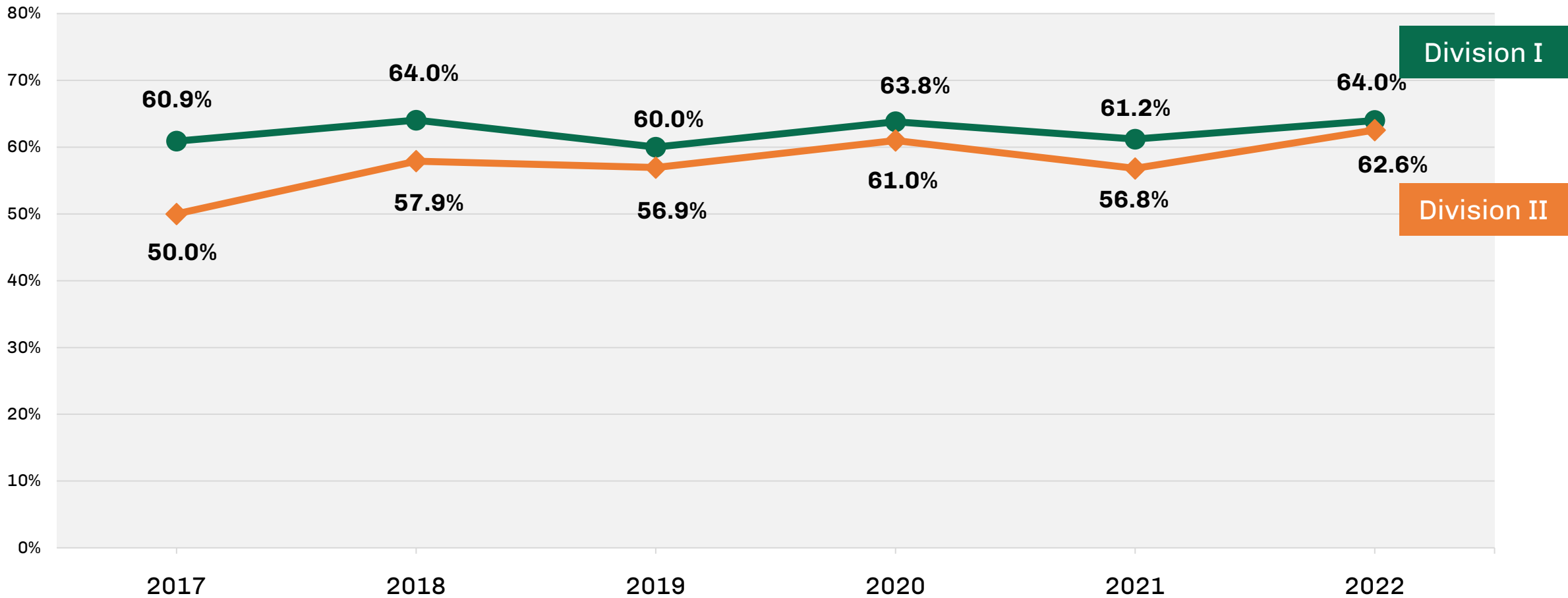


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	156	175
DII	67	69

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

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

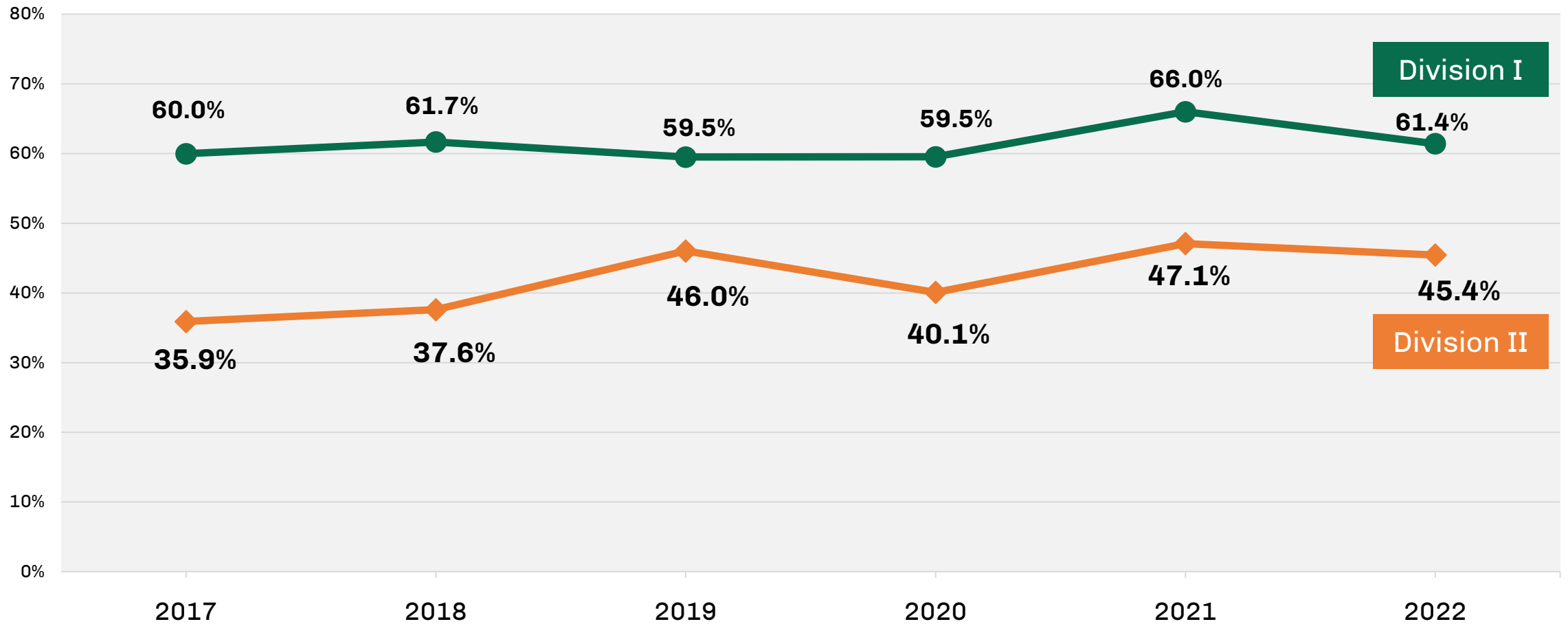


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	285	234
DII	186	244

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

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

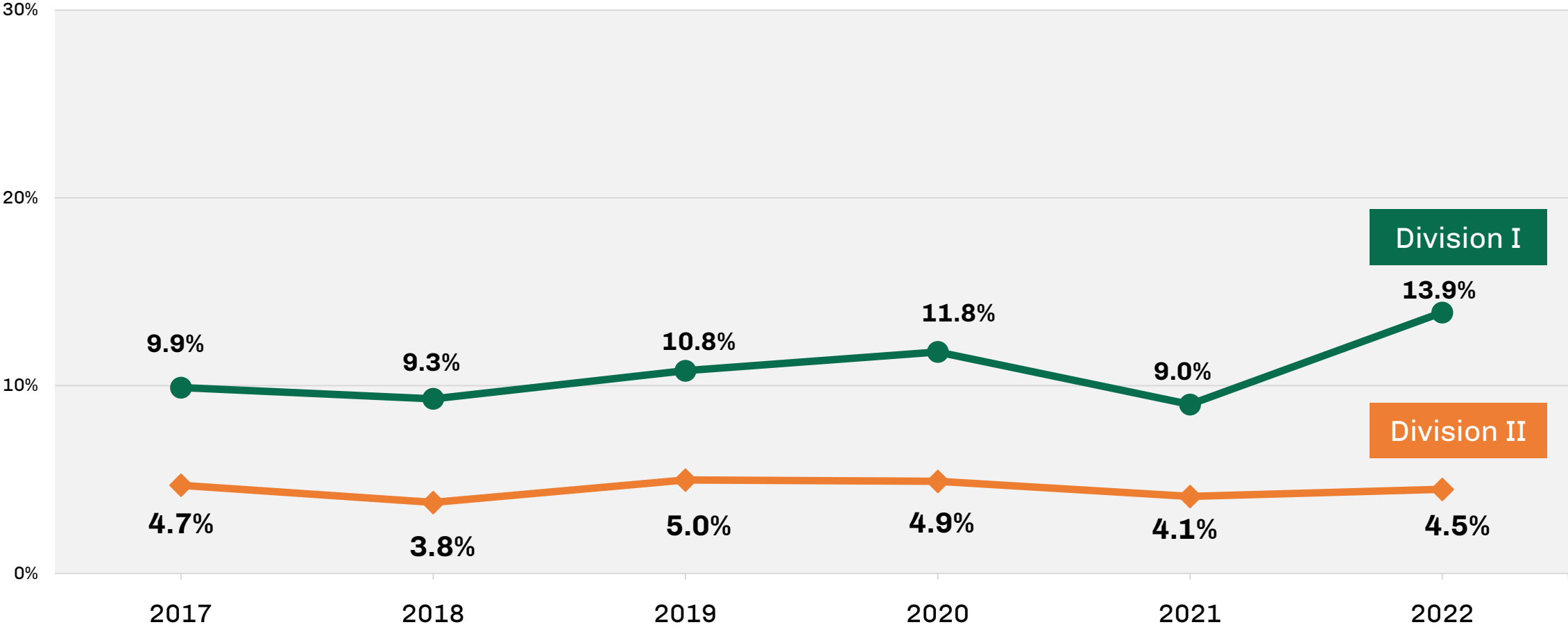


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	364	307
DII	185	214

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

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

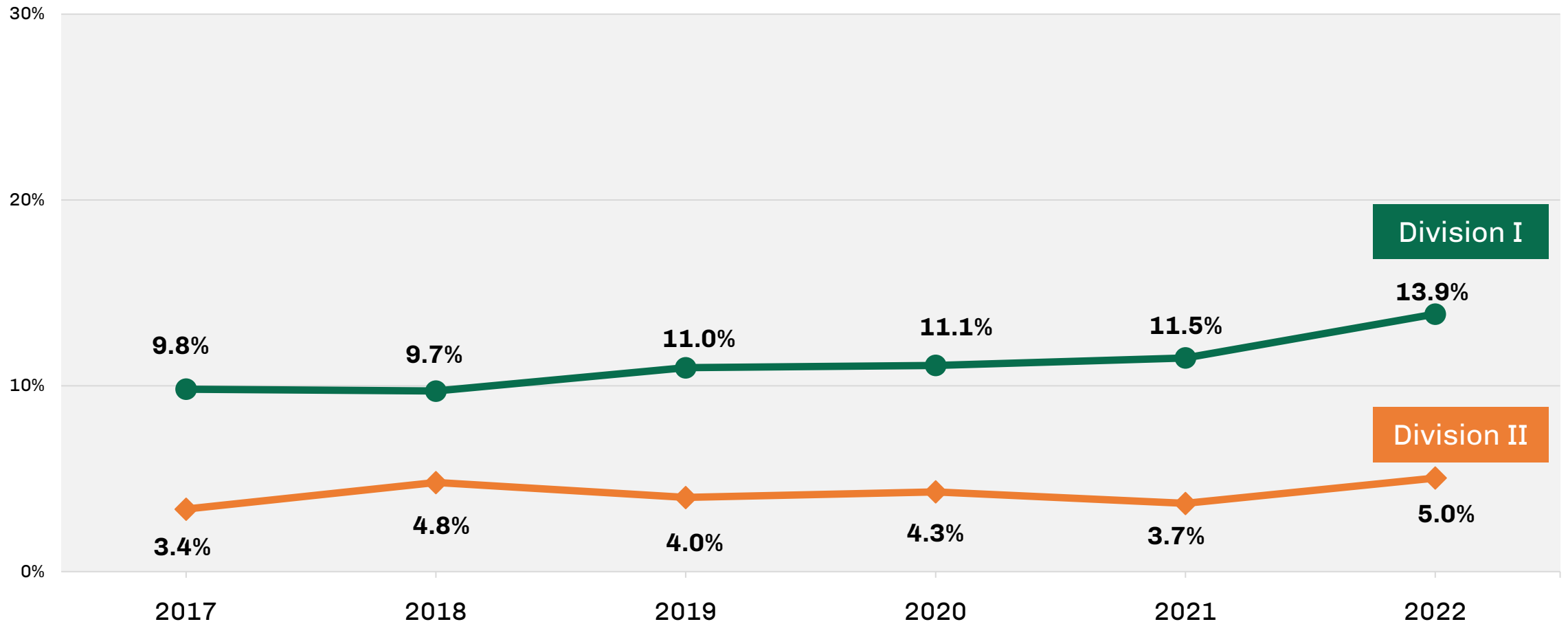


Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	157	179
DII	109	106

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

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



Total Numbers

	2017	2022
DI	233	273
DII	77	109

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

Detailed Methodology

- ▶ Prospective student-athletes 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 through that 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 prospective student-athlete residing in the U.S. during that student's 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 Divisions I and 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 into 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 were not included because Division III student-athletes were only recently (August 1, 2023) required to register with the Eligibility Center. For this population, the only source of international participation is the [NCAA Demographics Database](#).
- ▶ The number and percentage of international student-athletes within the academic data are higher than what is captured in the NCAA Demographics Database. This may be due to 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.





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