



CONVENTION

2026

Understanding Today's Student-Athlete Experience: Key Findings From the 2025 NCAA GOALS Study

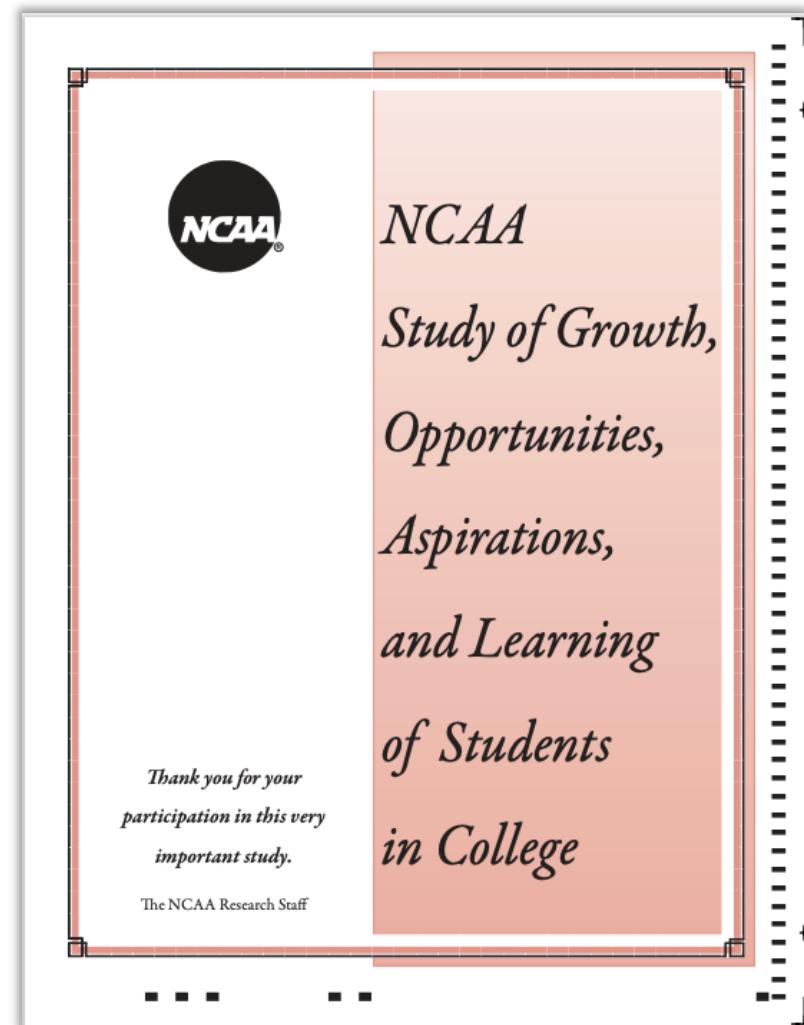


CONVENTION

2026

2025 GOALS Study

- Fifth iteration of this study (2006, 2010, 2015, 2019). Some survey items allow us to examine trends; others are new.
- Faculty athletics representatives at all active member schools were asked to survey (via paper or online administration) one to three prespecified teams on campus. Selected teams were determined by a stratified random sampling procedure.
- Survey was in the field from December 2024 through June 2025.
- 20,887 current student-athletes participated in the study from 493 schools.
- Final data was weighted based on 2024-25 NCAA participation rates to ensure findings are representative.



RESEARCH

NCAA GOALS Study Topics



Athletics experiences

Academic experiences

Social and team experiences

Recruitment process

Time commitments

On-campus support

Finances



RESEARCH

**While schedules remain full,
student-athletes have shifted the
ways they spend their time.**



RESEARCH

Student-Athlete Time Commitments

	 Athletic Activities (hours / week)	 Academic Activities (hours / week)	 Socializing or Relaxing (hours / week)
Division I	34	33.5	15.5
Division II	32	33.5	17.5
Division III	29	36.5	17.5

6.8 hours of sleep nightly



Note: Self-reported survey data. Median weekly hours shown for athletic, academic and socializing/relaxing activities in-season. Average (mean) hours per night shown for sleep time. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



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Student-Athlete Time Commitments

	 Athletic Activities (hours / week)	 Academic Activities (hours / week)	 Socializing or Relaxing (hours / week)
Division I	34 (+1)	33.5 (-2)	15.5 (+2)
Division II	32 (+1)	33.5 (-3.5)	17.5 (+2)
Division III	29 (+1)	36.5 (-3.5)	17.5 (+2)

6.8 hours of sleep nightly



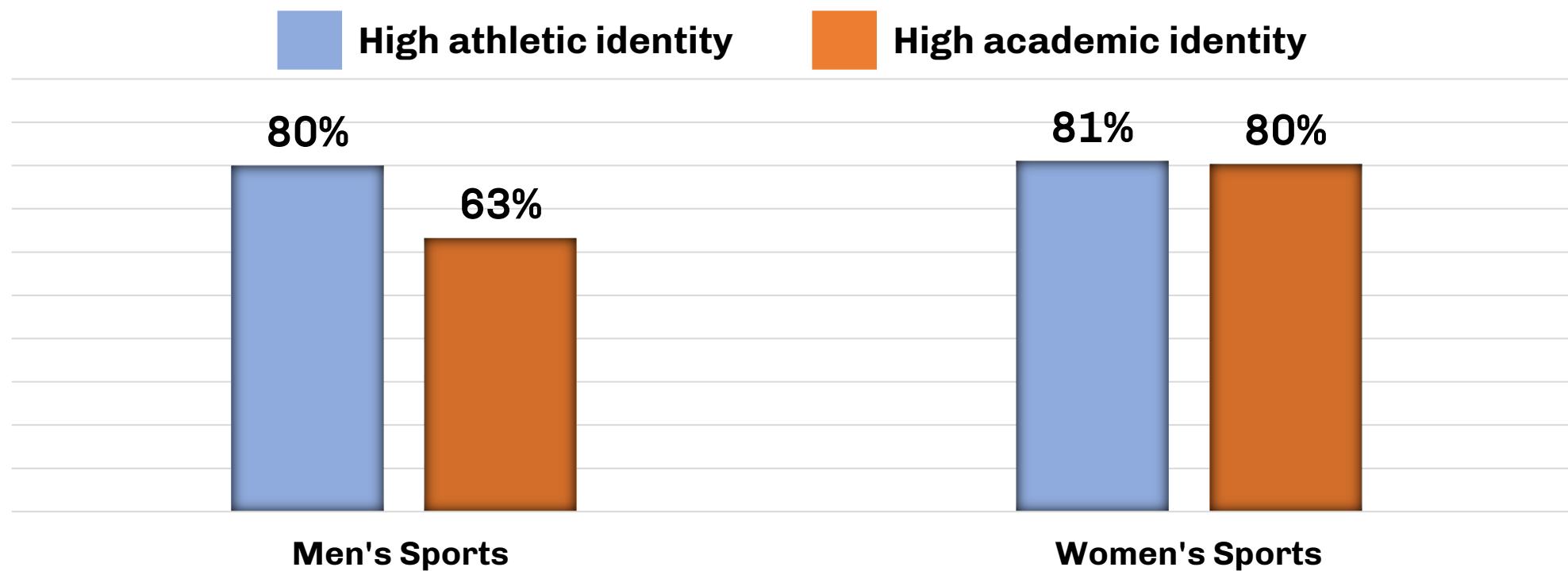
+/- change in reported time from the 2019 study

Note: Self-reported survey data. Median weekly hours shown for athletic, academic and socializing/relaxing activities in-season. Average (mean) hours per night shown for sleep time. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



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Athletic and Academic Identity (Overall)



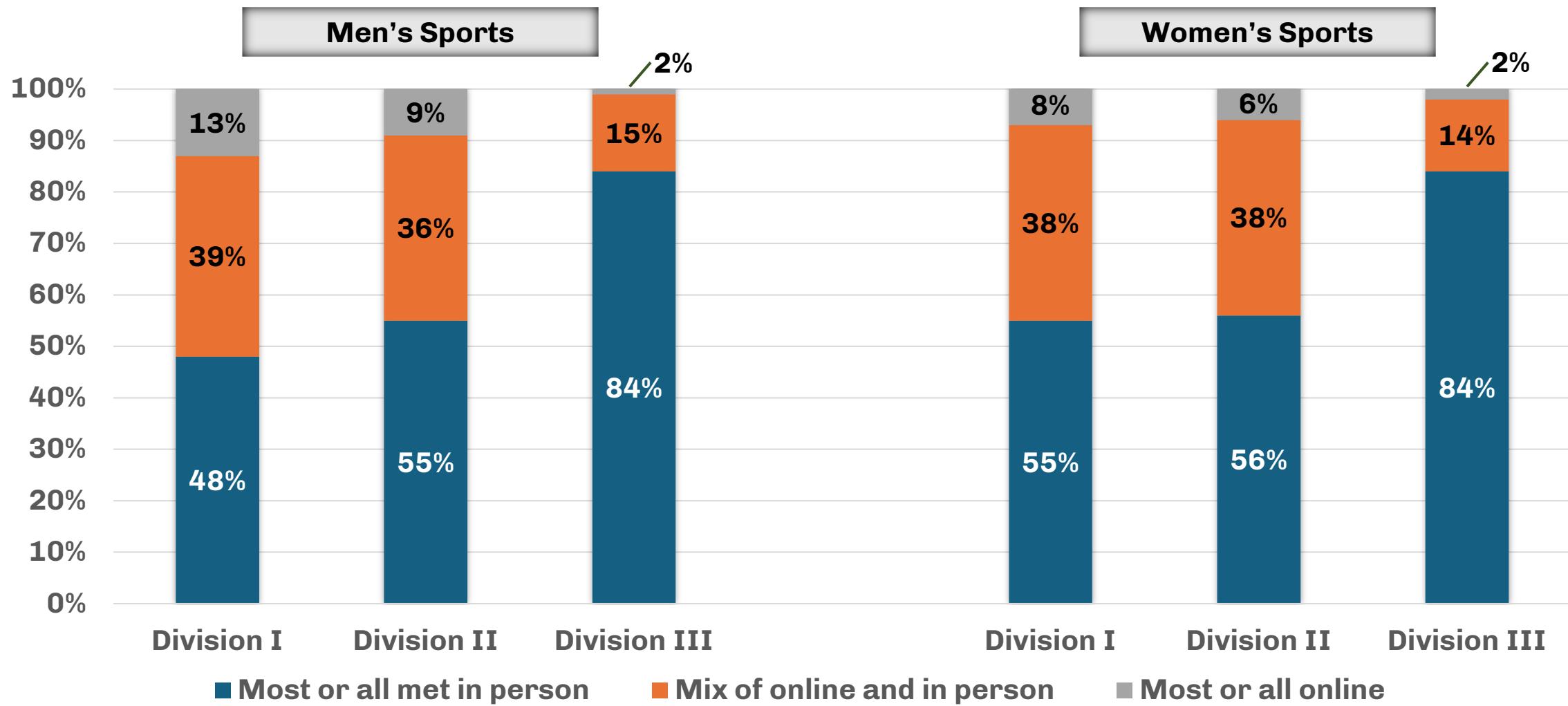
- ▶ *Across divisions, 55% of men's sports student-athletes and 68% of women's sports student-athletes had both high athletic and high academic identity.*
- ▶ *Men's sports student-athletes spend similar or slightly more amounts of time on athletics, whereas women's sports student-athletes have consistently reported spending several more hours per week on academic pursuits than men (M 33.5 vs. W 37.5).*

Note: High athletic identity and high academic identity are both a mean of 5.0 or higher on four items with a 6-point scale (top two points are agree and strongly agree). Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).

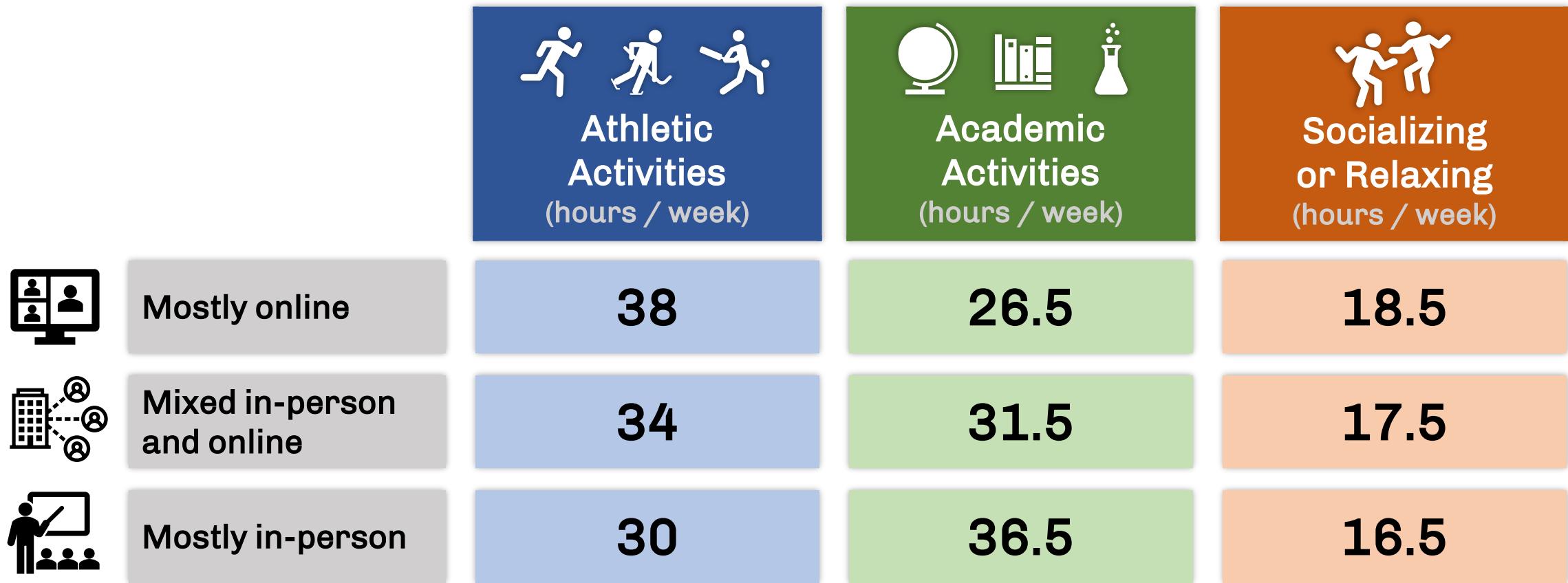


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How would you describe your classes this academic year?



Student-Athlete Time Commitments by Course-Taking Patterns



- *Student-athletes taking mostly online classes reported the lowest weekly time on academics and the highest weekly time on athletics and socialization/relaxation. This trend is consistent across divisions.*

Note: Self-reported survey data. Median weekly hours shown for athletic, academic and socializing/relaxing activities in-season. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



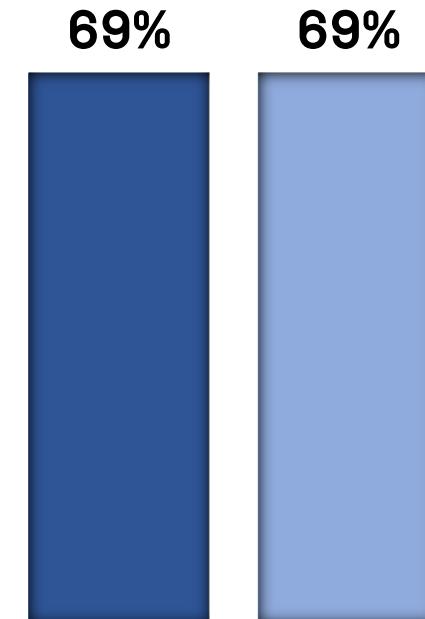
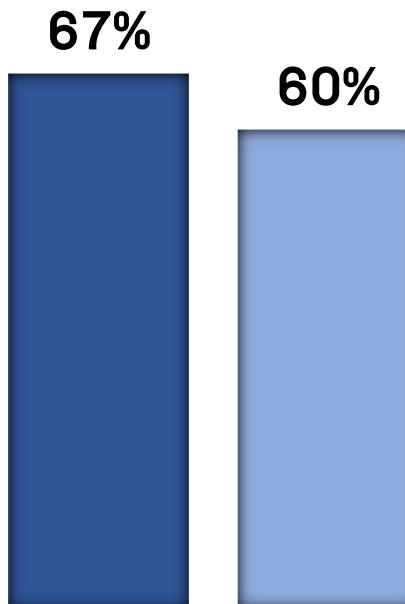
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“I am able to find an appropriate balance between academics, athletics and other aspects of college life.”
(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)

Division I

Division II

Division III



■ Men's Sports ■ Women's Sports

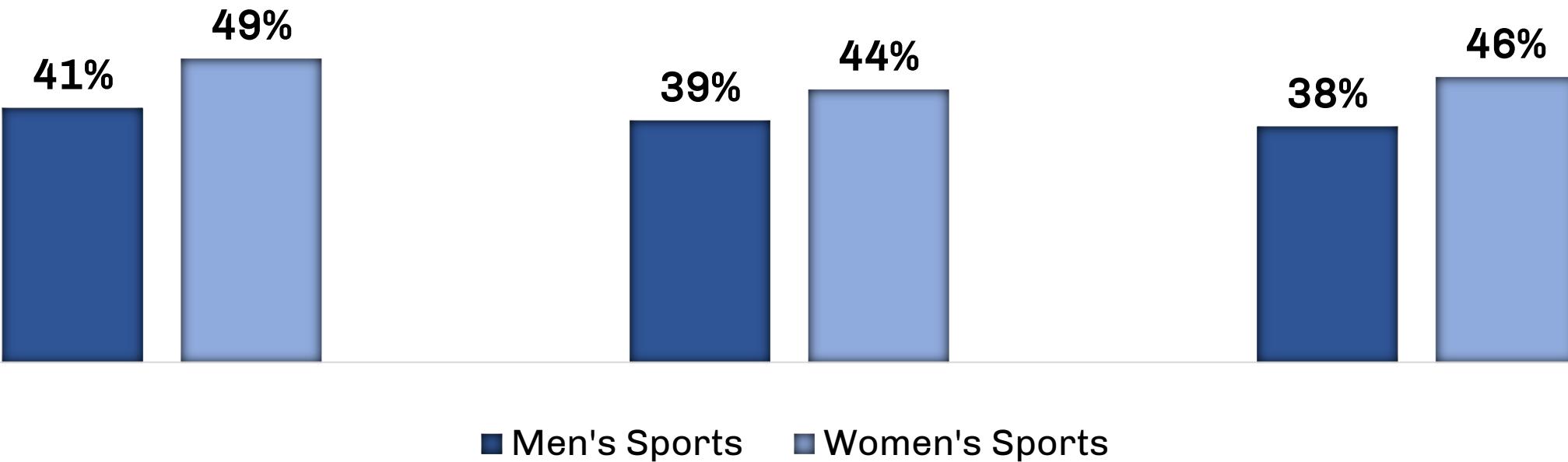
“I would like to be more involved on campus outside of athletics.”

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

Division I

Division II

Division III



Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



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Student-athletes report they want more time for ...

	Men's Sports	Women's Sports
Sleeping	64%	77%
Relaxing alone	59%	75%
Visiting home / family	63%	70%
Socializing	59%	72%
Extracurricular activities	47%	59%
Academics	45%	55%
Working at a job or NIL	40%	40%
Athletics	47%	29%

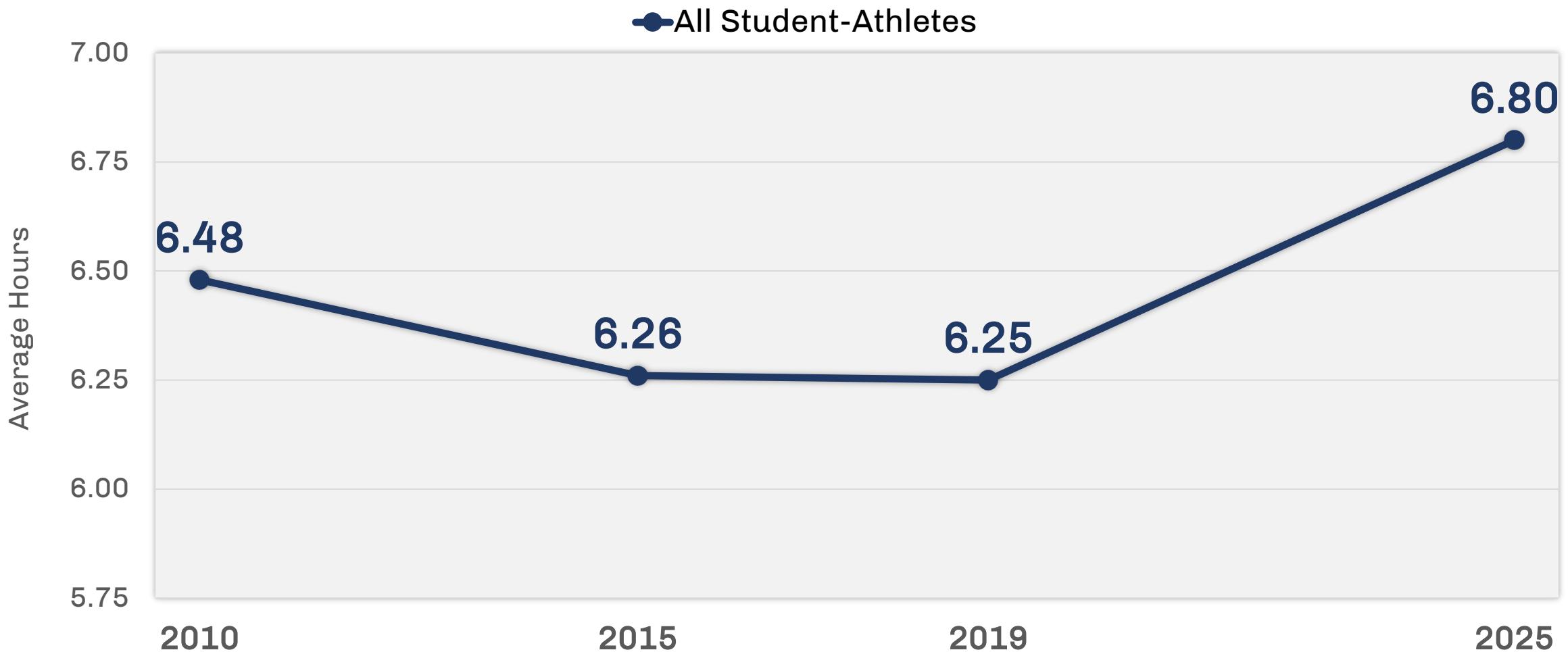
Note: Table sorted by overall endorsement percentages. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).

Good news! Student-athletes are getting more sleep.



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Trends in Average Weekday Hours of Sleep In-Season, 2010-2025

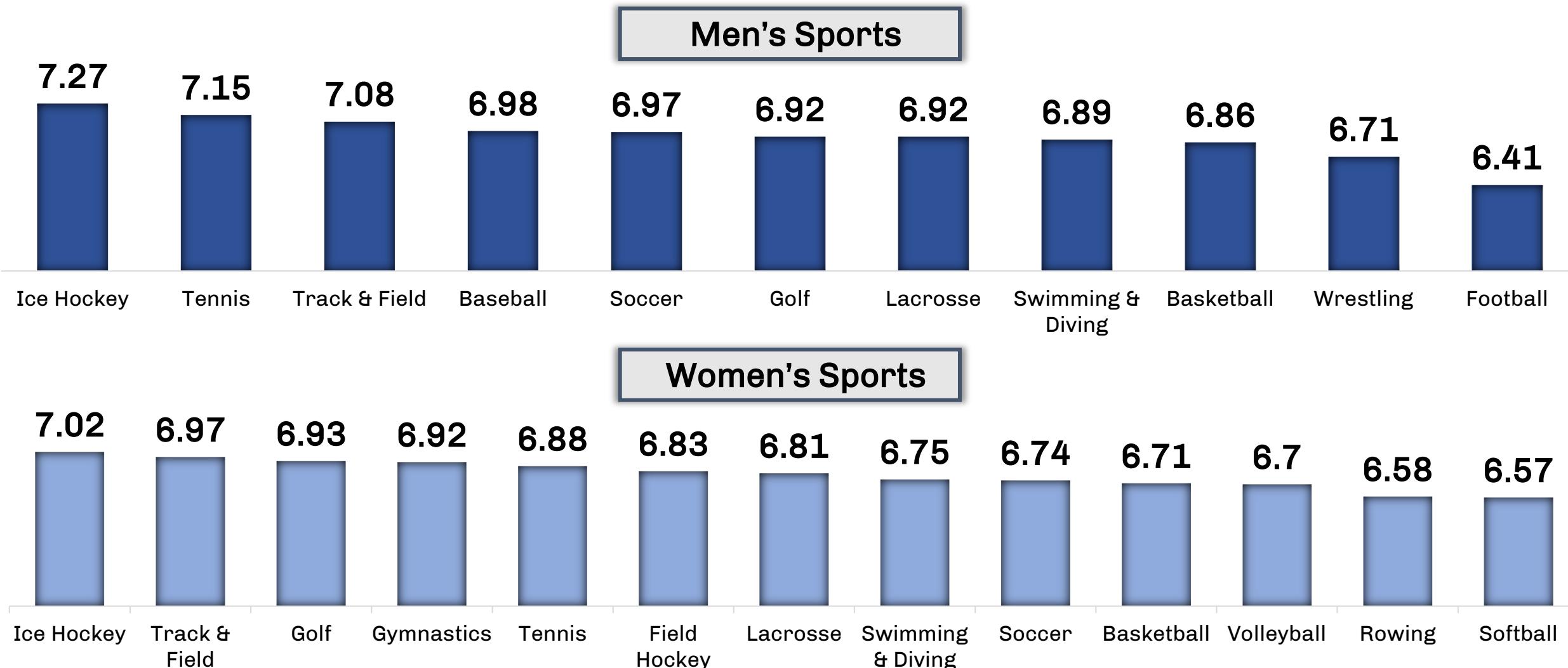


Note: Self-reported survey data. Sources: NCAA GOALS Studies (2010, 2015, 2019, 2025).



RESEARCH

Average Weekday Hours of Sleep In-Season by Sport



Note: Self-reported survey data. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



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Change in Average Weekday Hours of Sleep In-Season by Sport, 2019 to 2025

Men's Sports	+/‐ Minutes
Lacrosse	+46
Soccer	+41
Tennis	+40
Swimming and Diving	+39
Baseball	+38
Basketball	+35
Football	+34
Track and Field	+33
Ice Hockey	+19
Golf	+19
Wrestling	+9

Women's Sports	+/‐ Minutes
Volleyball	+40
Golf	+37
Soccer	+35
Basketball	+34
Softball	+32
Rowing	+29
Tennis	+29
Field Hockey	+28
Gymnastics	+27
Track and Field	+27
Swimming and Diving	+25
Lacrosse	+25
Ice Hockey	+21

**Community service engagement
remains at high levels, but
frequency has dipped from prior
years.**

Community Service Engagement

		A few hours <i>PER MONTH</i> or more		A few hours <i>PER YEAR</i> or more	
		2019	2025	2019	2025
Division I	Men's Sports	48%	43%	87%	85%
	Women's Sports	49%	39%	90%	87%
Division II	Men's Sports	50%	46%	88%	85%
	Women's Sports	57%	42%	93%	87%
Division III	Men's Sports	46%	41%	85%	83%
	Women's Sports	49%	37%	88%	84%

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

Highest monthly engagement:

- *By demographic subgroup:* men's sports athletes identifying as LGBTQ+ (52%) or Black (49%).
- *By sport:* women's gymnastics (62%), Division II men's basketball (55%), Division II men's soccer (53%), Division III men's track and field (53%).

Note: Participants were asked, "On average over the past year, how much time have you spent taking part in service projects or volunteer activities of any type?" Sources: NCAA GOALS Studies (2019, 2025).



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Required by Athletics to Engage in Community Service

		2019	2025
Division I	Men's Sports	60%	59%
	Women's Sports	65%	60%
Division II	Men's Sports	68%	62%
	Women's Sports	75%	66%
Division III	Men's Sports	51%	49%
	Women's Sports	51%	45%

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

- ▶ **Highest coach requirement by sport (>80%): Division I/Division II women's basketball, Division II women's lacrosse, Division I field hockey, Division I women's volleyball.**
- ▶ **Lowest coach requirement by sport (<33%): women's rowing, Division III women's tennis, Division III softball**

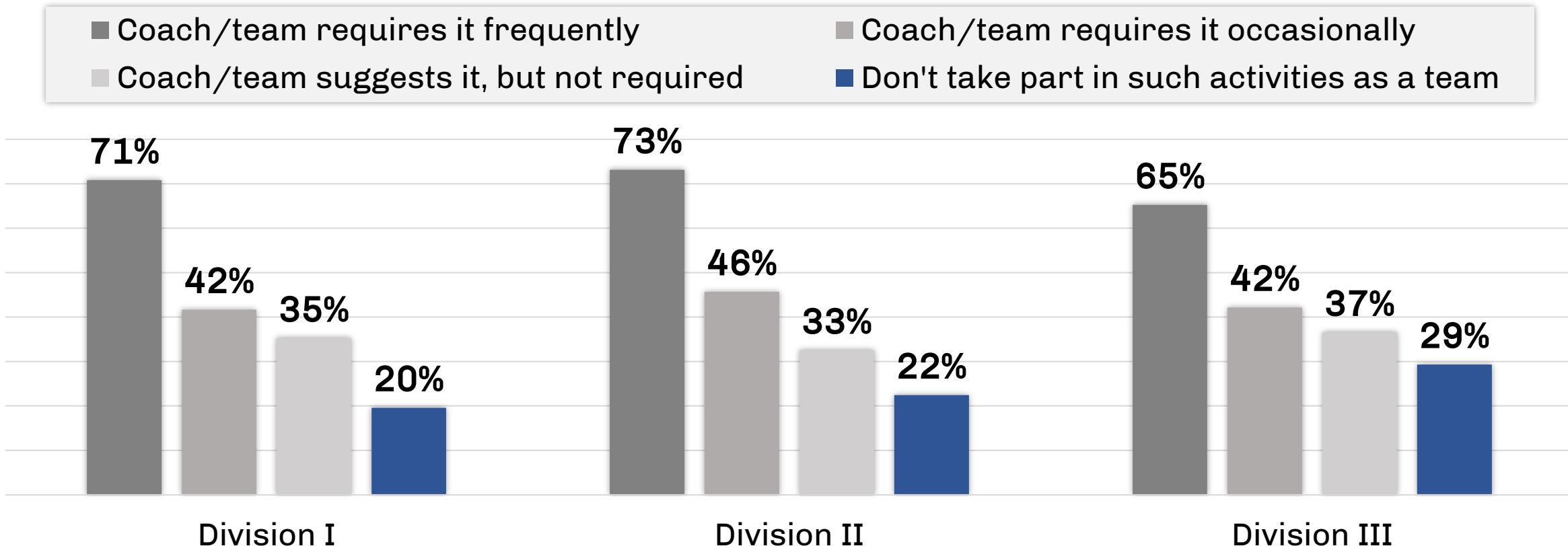
Note: Participants were asked, "Are you required to take part in service projects or volunteer activities as part of your athletics participation?" Table includes participants who responded "Yes, my coach/team requires it frequently" and "Yes, my coach/team requires it occasionally." Sources: NCAA GOALS Studies (2019, 2025).



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Monthly Community Service Engagement and Athletics Requirement

(Percentage of Participants Who Engaged a Few Hours Per Month or More)



► *25% of student-athletes engage in community service activities at least a few hours per month outside of team activities.*

Note: Participants were asked, "On average over the past year, how much time have you spent taking part in service projects or volunteer activities of any type?" Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



RESEARCH

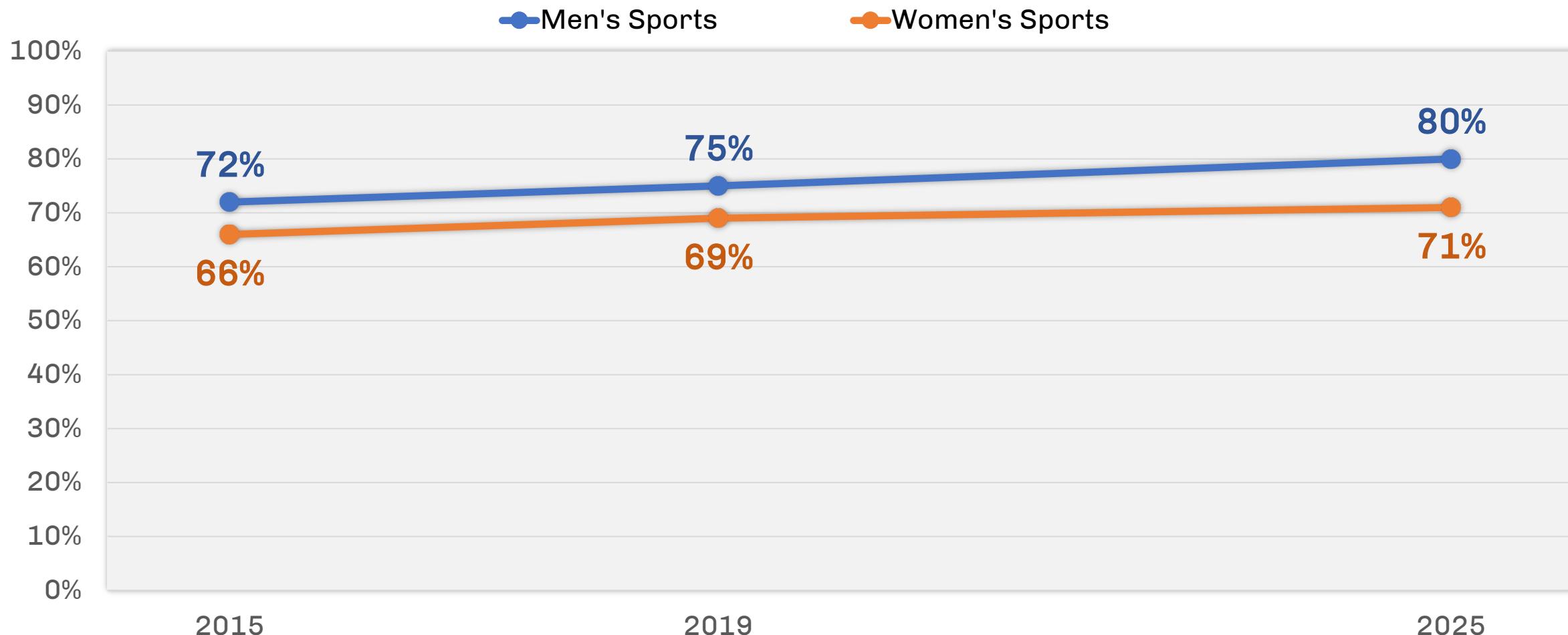
Sport gender gaps remain in the relationships student-athletes have with their coaches.



RESEARCH

“I would feel comfortable talking to my coaches about physical health issues.”

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

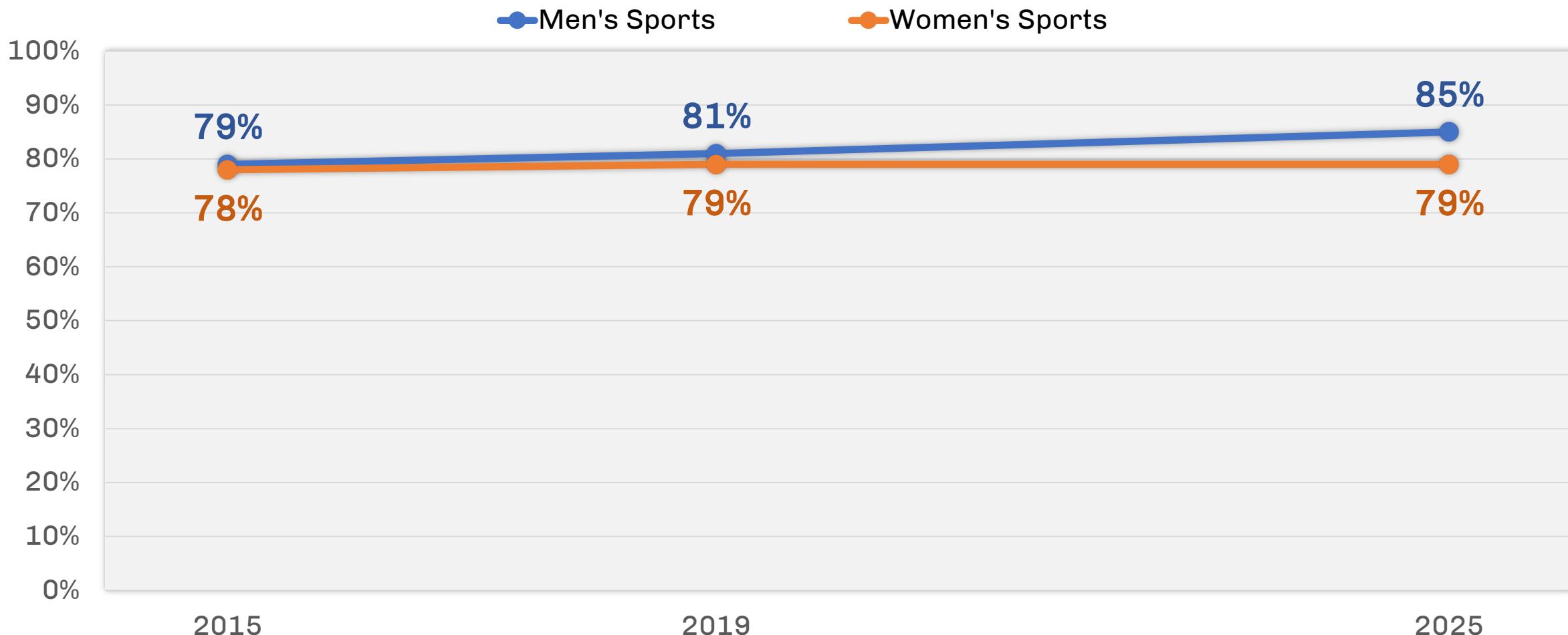


Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Sources: NCAA GOALS Studies (2015, 2019, 2025).



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“My coaches care about my physical well-being.”
(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)



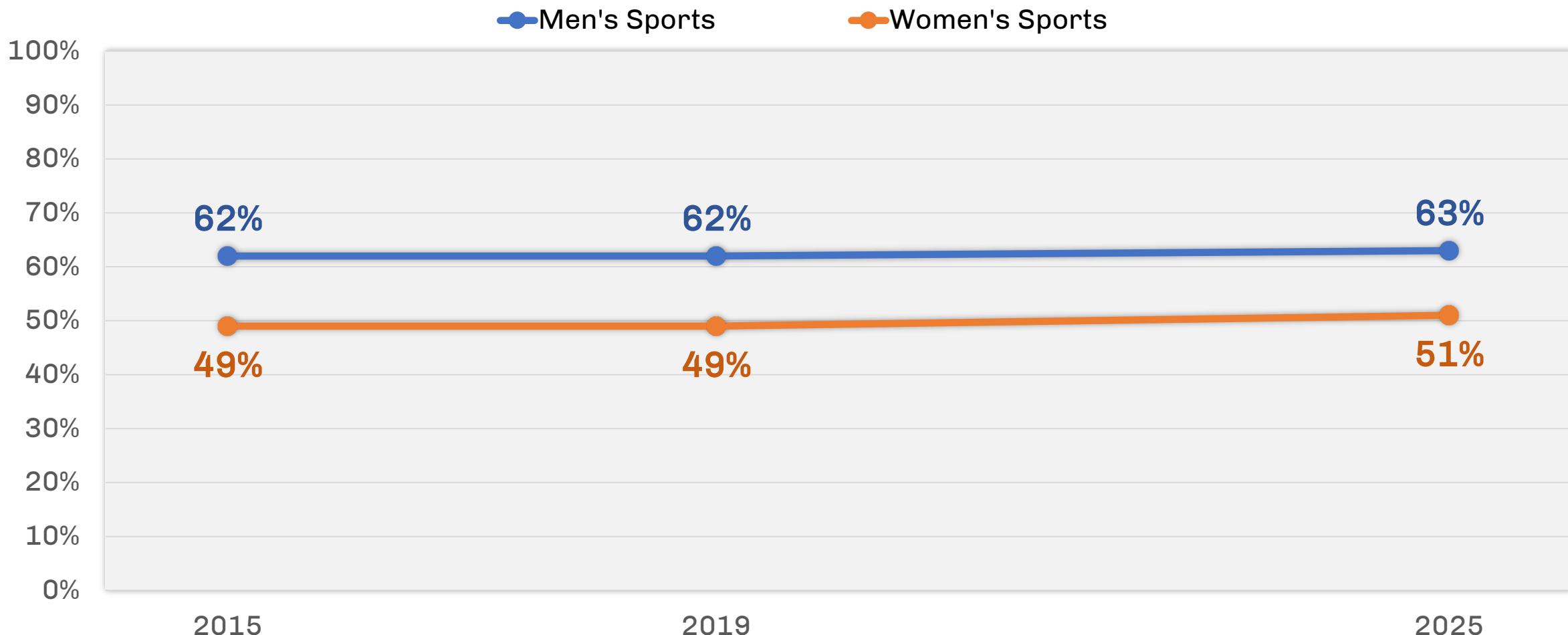
Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Sources: NCAA GOALS Studies (2015, 2019, 2025).



RESEARCH

"I would feel comfortable talking to my coaches about mental health issues."

(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed "Agree" or "Strongly Agree")

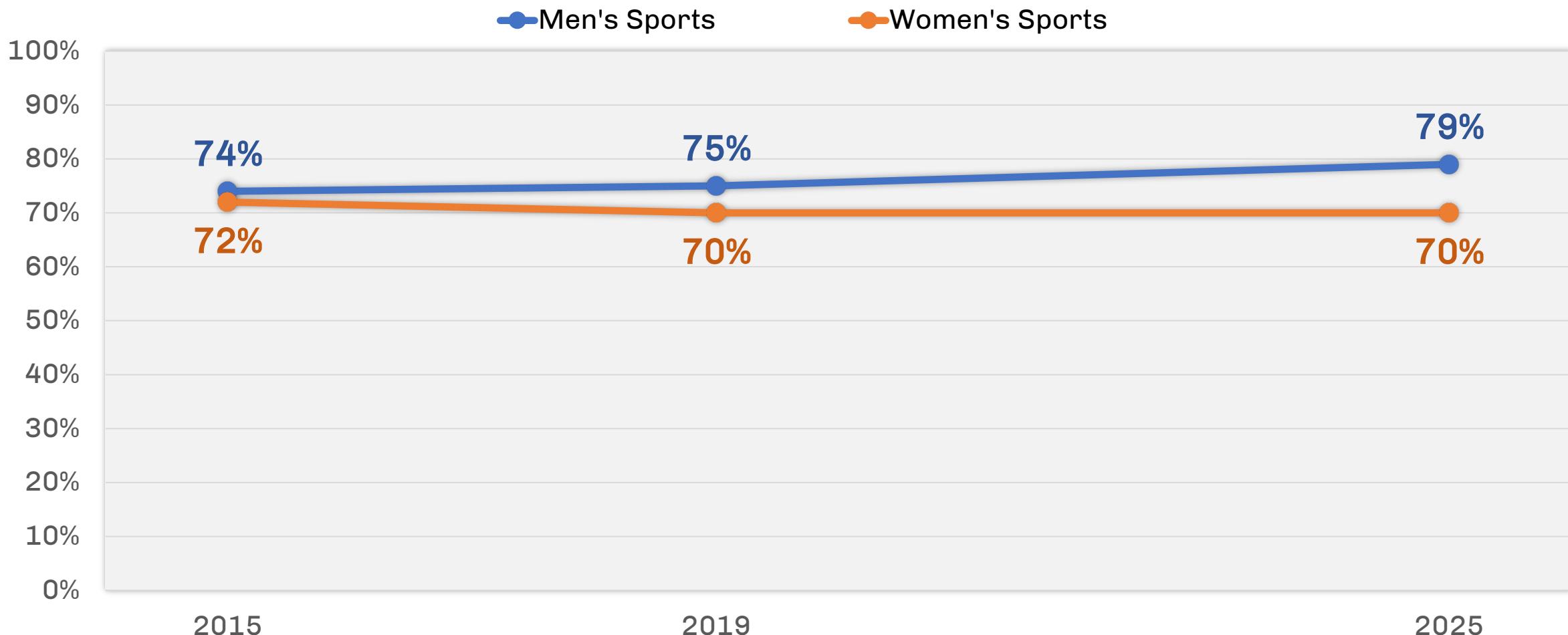


Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Sources: NCAA GOALS Studies (2015, 2019, 2025).



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“My coaches care about my mental well-being.”
(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)



Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Sources: NCAA GOALS Studies (2015, 2019, 2025).



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Relationship With Coaches

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

My head coach can be trusted.

I would feel comfortable talking with my coaches about my role on the team.

I often ask my coaches how things are going in their lives.

81%



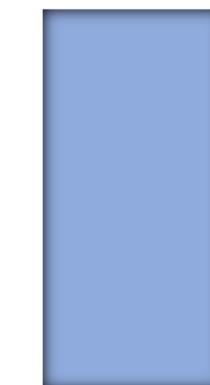
69%



79%



68%



50%



45%



■ Men's Sports ■ Women's Sports

“My coaches ...”

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

	Men's Sports	Women's Sports
Are always respectful of persons from other racial/ethnic groups.	90%	89%
Are always respectful of persons who identify as LGBTQ+.	83%	88%
Are accepting of differing viewpoints and cultures.	83%	78%
Have created an inclusive environment for all members of the team.	80%	70%

- ▶ *LGBTQ+ student-athletes were less likely to agree that their coaches are always respectful of LGBTQ+ identities, particularly those participating in men's sports (74%). LGBTQ+ women's sports student-athletes were lowest of any subgroup to agree that their coaches have created an inclusive environment for all (64%).*
- ▶ *BIPOC student-athletes generally were a few percentage points lower than their white peers (91%) to agree that their coaches are always respectful of other racial/ethnic groups (Asian 88%, Black 86%, Latinx 88%, Other 87%).*



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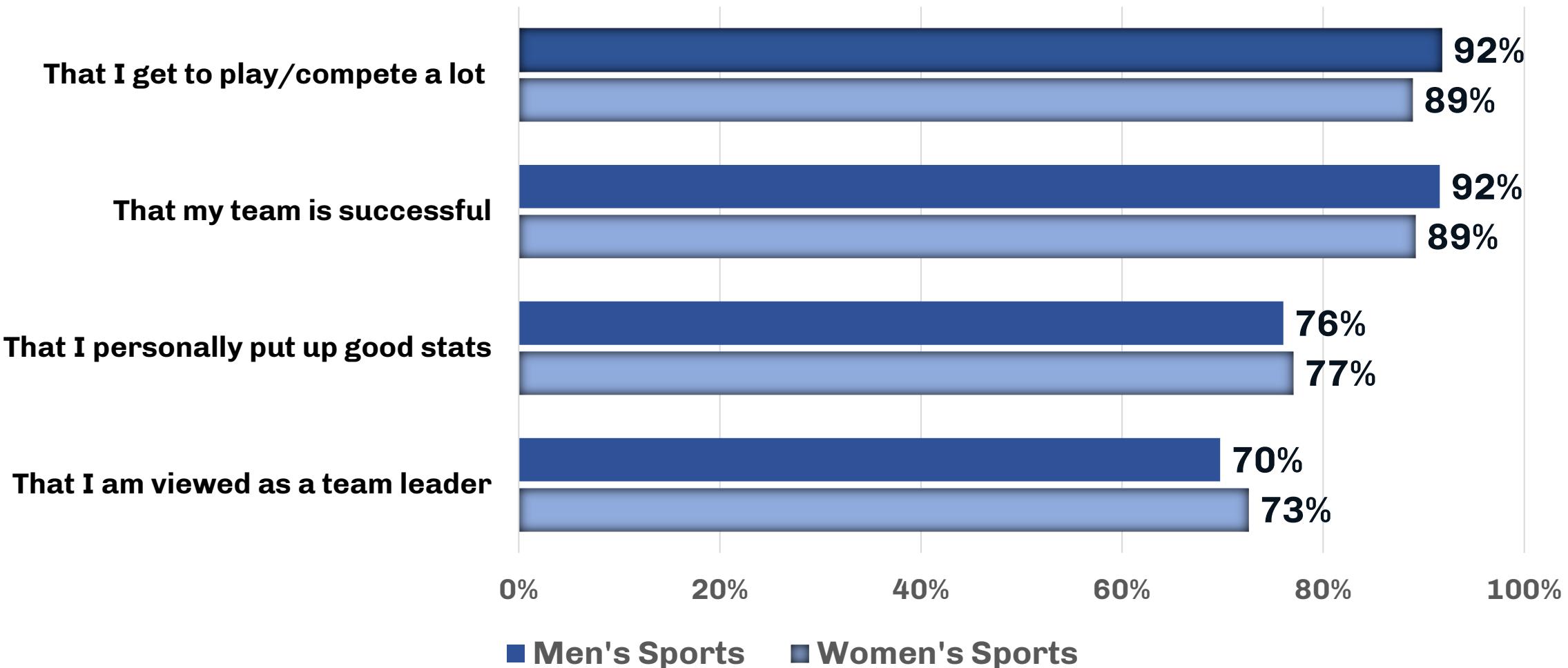
Athletics opportunities play a significant role in college choice and transfer decisions.



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How important are these aspects of your college athletics experience?

(Percentage Who Endorsed “Important” or “Very important”)



Note: Top 2 points on a 4-point scale. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).

Factors Contributing to Decision To Attend Current College

(Responses Among Nontransfers)

>50%

	Men's Sports	Women's Sports
Chance to play my sport at the NCAA level	86%	84%
Academics	74%	78%
Liked the people on this team	60%	61%
Cost of college	55%	57%
Proximity to home	54%	54%
Quality of the athletics facilities	49%	43%
Presence of a particular coach	46%	39%
Expectations of others	42%	38%
Exposure I would get on this team	40%	35%
Friends at this school	38%	28%
Coach promised a certain role / playing time	33%	31%
Reputation for developing pro or Olympic athletes	25%	9%
NIL opportunities	15%	9%

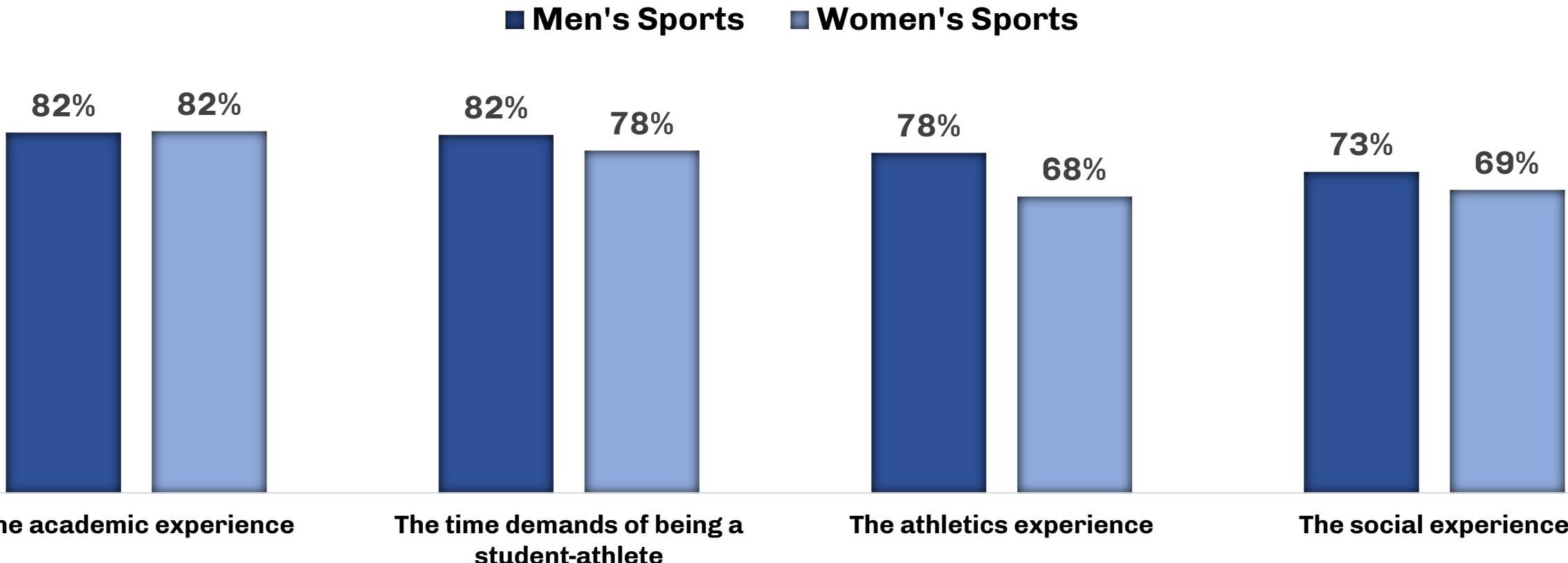
5-10 percentage points lower for men's and women's sports transfers

5-10 percentage points higher for men's and women's sports transfers

Note: Table sorted by men's sports nontransfer endorsement percentages. Number of nontransfers in sample: 9,548 in men's sports and 7,113 in women's sports. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).

How accurate were your initial expectations of _____ at this college?

(Percentage endorsing “Mostly accurate” or “Very accurate”)



- ▶ *Similar rates across division, except for accurate expectations of the athletics experience among women's sports athletes — highest in Division III (72%), 67% in Division I and lowest in Division II (62%).*
- ▶ *Notable increase in accurate expectations of the time demands among women's sports athletes in Division I from the 2019 study (74% to 79%).*

Note: Table sorted by Division I men's sports endorsement percentages. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).

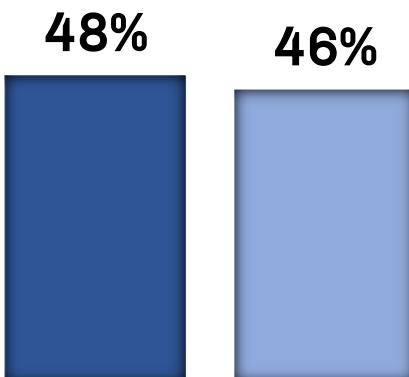


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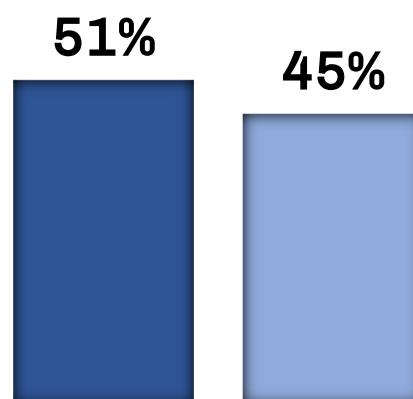
“I would have attended this college even if a different coach was here.”

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

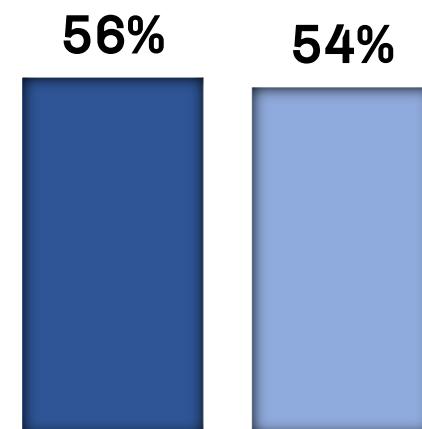
Division I



Division II



Division III



■ Men's Sports ■ Women's Sports

Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).

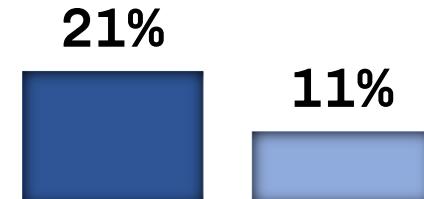
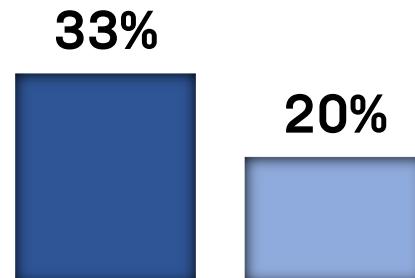
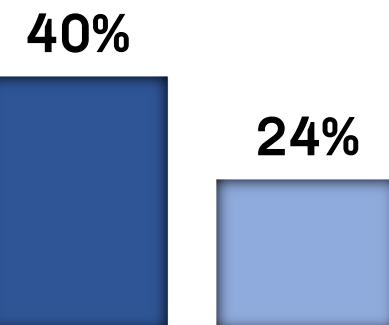
“If my current coach left this school, I would consider transferring.”

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

Division I

Division II

Division III



■ Men's Sports ■ Women's Sports

Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



RESEARCH

Top 5 Reasons for Transfer

(Percentage of transfers endorsing each item)

Men's Sports	
Wanted to compete at a higher level	41%
More playing time	29%
Needed change from previous coach/teammates	27%
Better academic opportunity or preferred degree/major	24%
Coaching change at my previous college	20%

Women's Sports	
Needed change from previous coach/teammates	47%
To improve my mental health or well-being	39%
Wanted to compete at a higher level	34%
Better academic opportunity or preferred degree/major	32%
More playing time	29%

- While four of the top five reasons for transfer were commonly endorsed by men's and women's sports athletes, the one item in each table that was not shared across sports gender is highlighted.

Note: Number of transfers in responses: 2,798 men's sports participants and 1,336 women's sports participants. Participants encouraged to select all that apply. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



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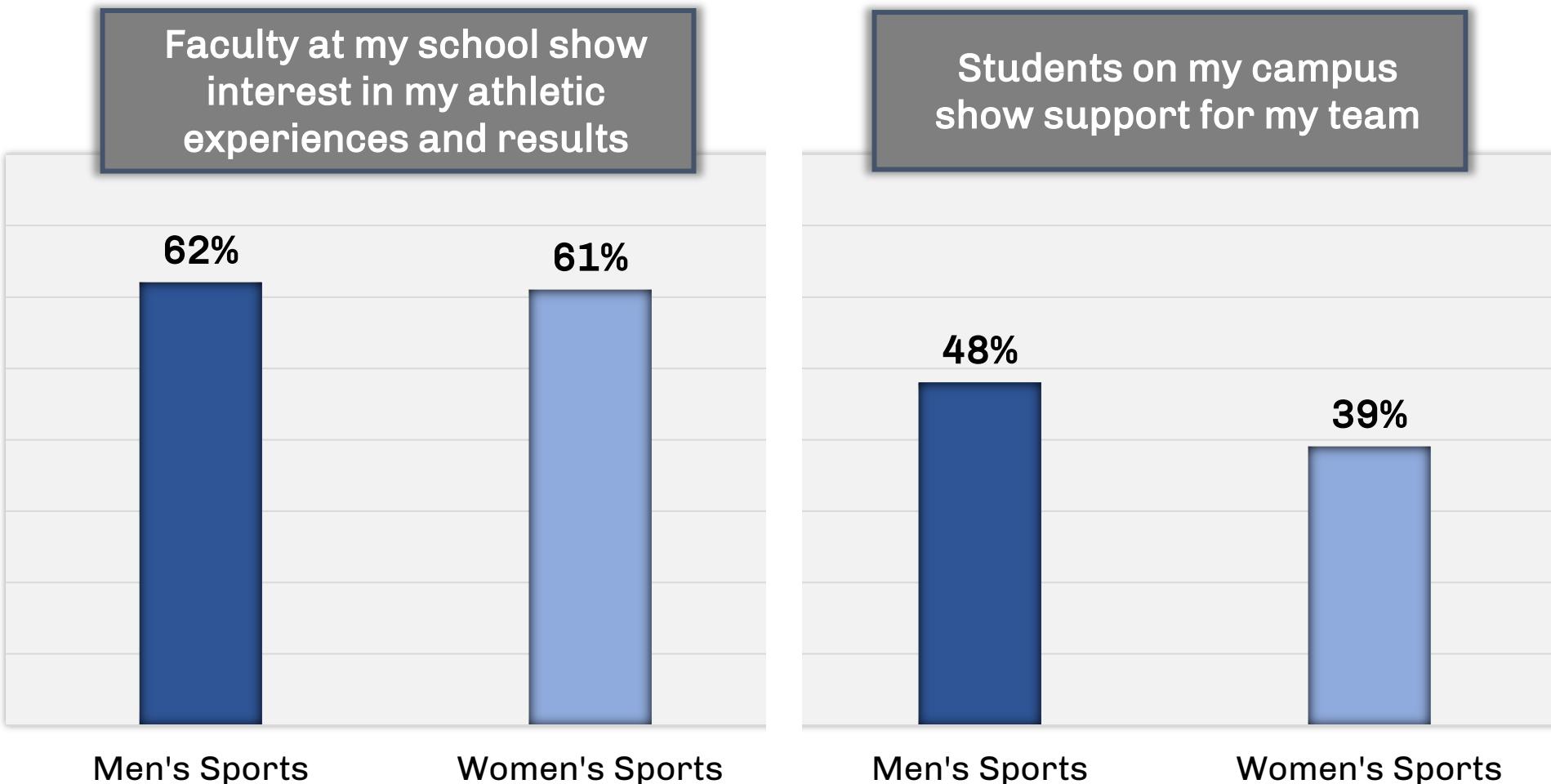
Many athletes feel faculty show interest in their athletics but perceive less support from the student body.



RESEARCH

Athletics Support From Faculty and Student Body on Campus

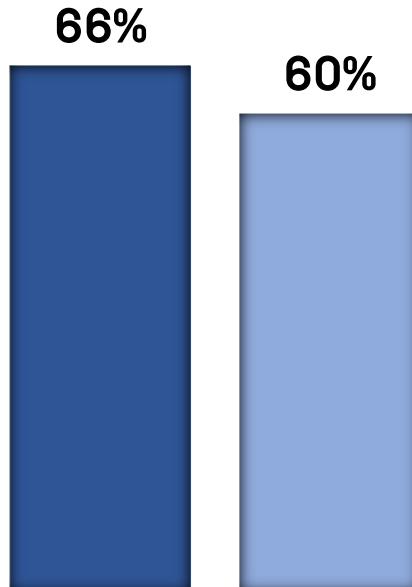
(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)



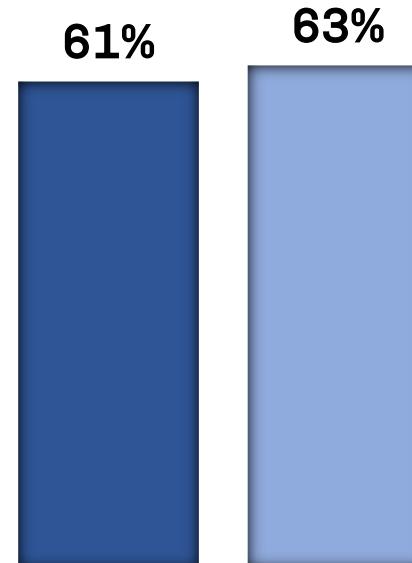
“Faculty at my school show interest in my athletic experiences and results.”

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

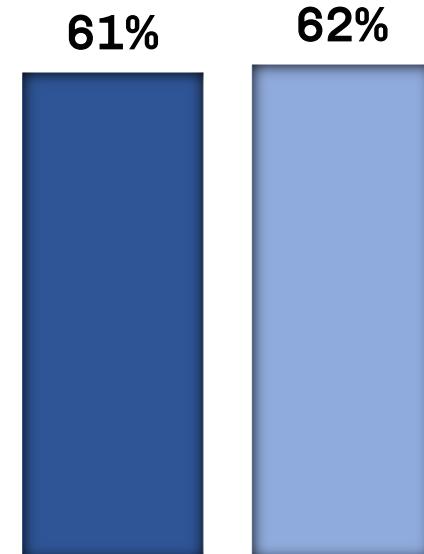
Division I



Division II



Division III



■ Men's Sports ■ Women's Sports

Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).

“Since coming to this institution, I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty member.”

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

		2019	2025
Division I	Men’s Sports	58%	55%
	Women’s Sports	60%	56%
Division II	Men’s Sports	61%	58%
	Women’s Sports	66%	59%
Division III	Men’s Sports	67%	63%
	Women’s Sports	70%	68%

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

Outliers:

- Several Division III sports were >70%: women’s rowing, women’s golf, men’s tennis, women’s lacrosse, men’s ice hockey, women’s swimming and diving.
- 50% or below: Division I women’s basketball, Division I baseball.



RESEARCH

“Students on my campus show support for my team.”

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

		2019	2025
Division I	Men’s Sports	50%	49%
	Women’s Sports	33%	33%
Division II	Men’s Sports	53%	49%
	Women’s Sports	39%	39%
Division III	Men’s Sports	55%	47%
	Women’s Sports	48%	45%

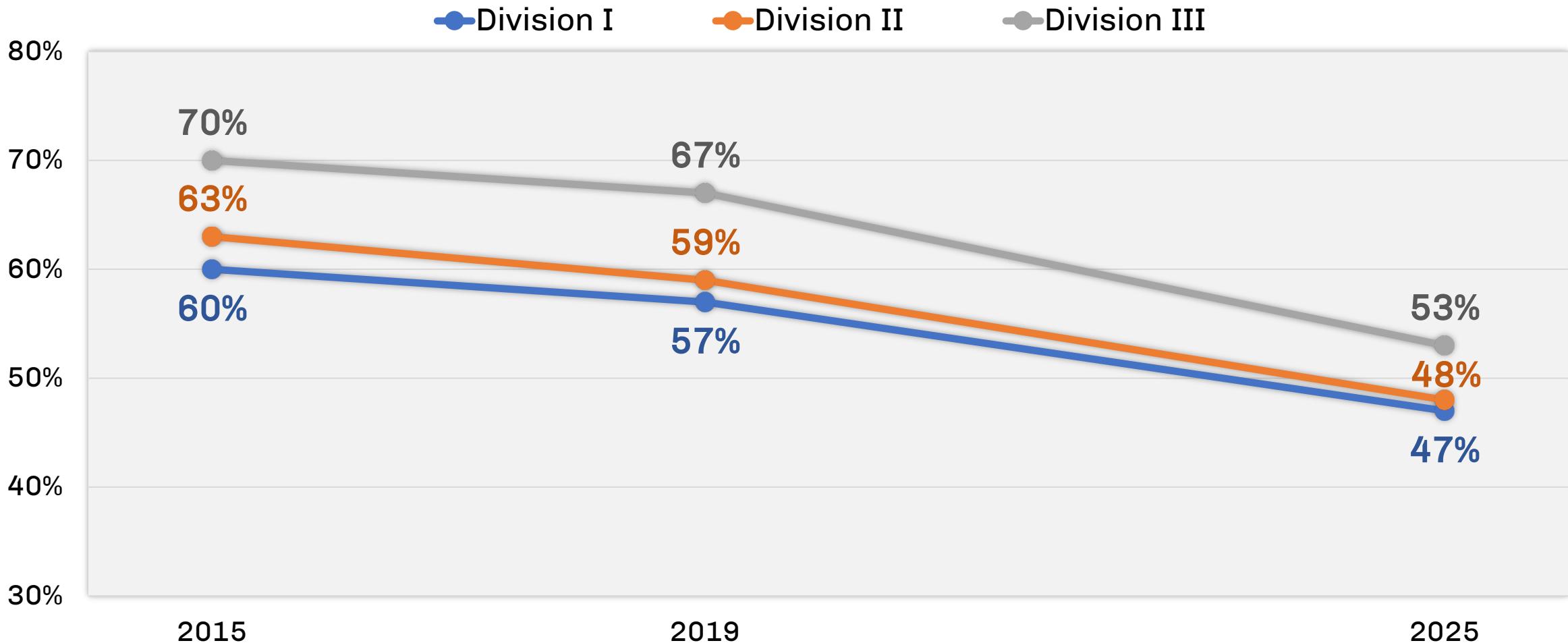


Yellow indicates a decrease of 5 percentage points or more from 2019.

Outliers:

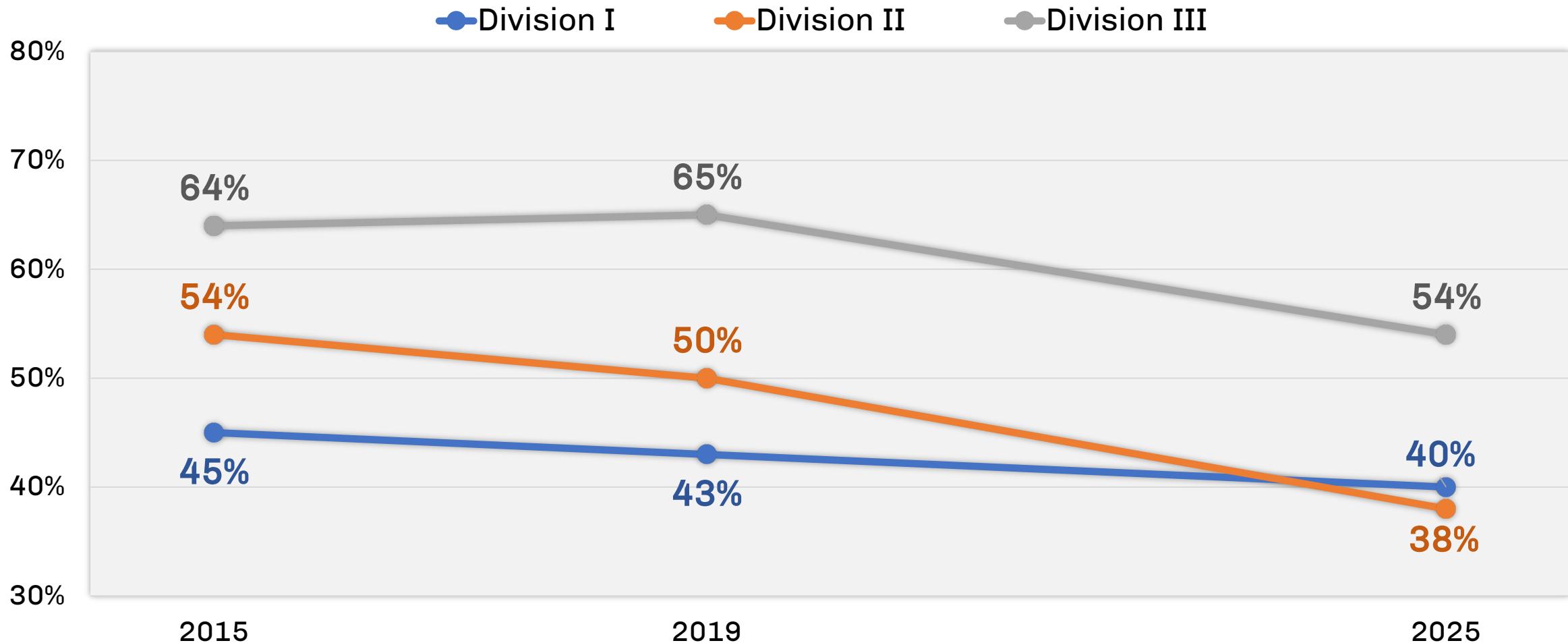
- *Sports with highest percentage of perceived support from students on campus (60% or higher): Division I/Division III men’s ice hockey, Division I/Division III men’s basketball, Division III women’s volleyball.*
- *Lowest percentage (30% or lower): women’s rowing, women’s swimming and diving, Division I field hockey, Division I women’s golf.*

“I frequently socialize with nonathletes at this college.”
(Percentage of Men’s Sports Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)



Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Sources: NCAA GOALS Studies (2015, 2019, 2025).

“I frequently socialize with nonathletes at this college.”
(Percentage of Women’s Sports Participants Who Endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)



Percentage of Student-Athletes Who Perceived Support From Students on Campus by Frequency of Nonathlete Engagement

Agree/Strongly Agree:
I frequently socialize with nonathletes at this college

59%



45%



Disagree/Strongly Disagree:
I frequently socialize with nonathletes at this college

33%



30%



■ Men's Sports ■ Women's Sports

- *Percentage of student-athletes who perceived student support for their team was 1.5-1.8 times higher among those who frequently socialized with nonathletes as compared with those who did not.*

Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale for student support item. Top 2 and bottom 2 points on a 6-point scale for the nonathlete engagement item. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



RESEARCH

**Over half of Division I men's
basketball players reported social
media harassment tied to their
play.**



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Social Media Harassment: “Have you ever ...”

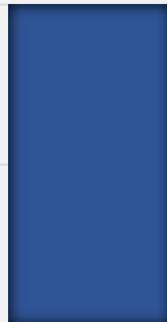
(Percentage of Participants Who Responded “Yes”)

Been harassed on social media about your athletic performance?

Been harassed on social media for reasons other than your athletic performance?

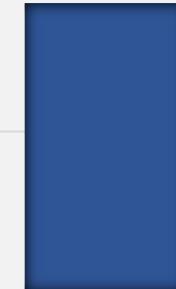
Received negative/threatening messages from someone who bet on your game?

10%



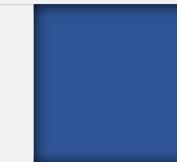
4%

9%



9%

5%



1%

Men's Sports

Women's Sports

Men's Sports

Women's Sports

Men's Sports

Women's Sports

Social Media Harassment: “Have you ever ...”

(Percentage of Men’s Sports Participants Who Responded “Yes”)

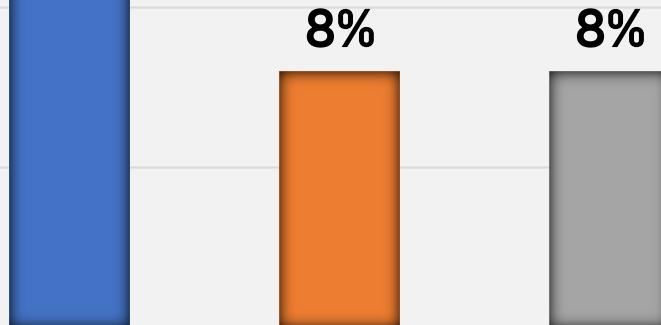
Been harassed on social media about your athletic performance?

16%



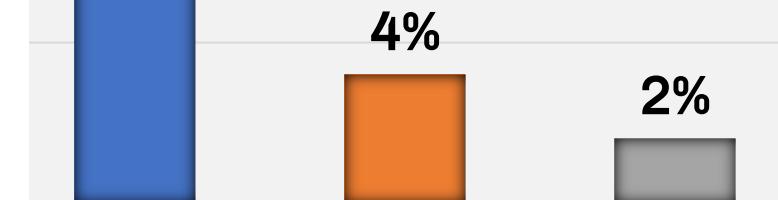
Been harassed on social media for reasons other than your athletic performance?

11%



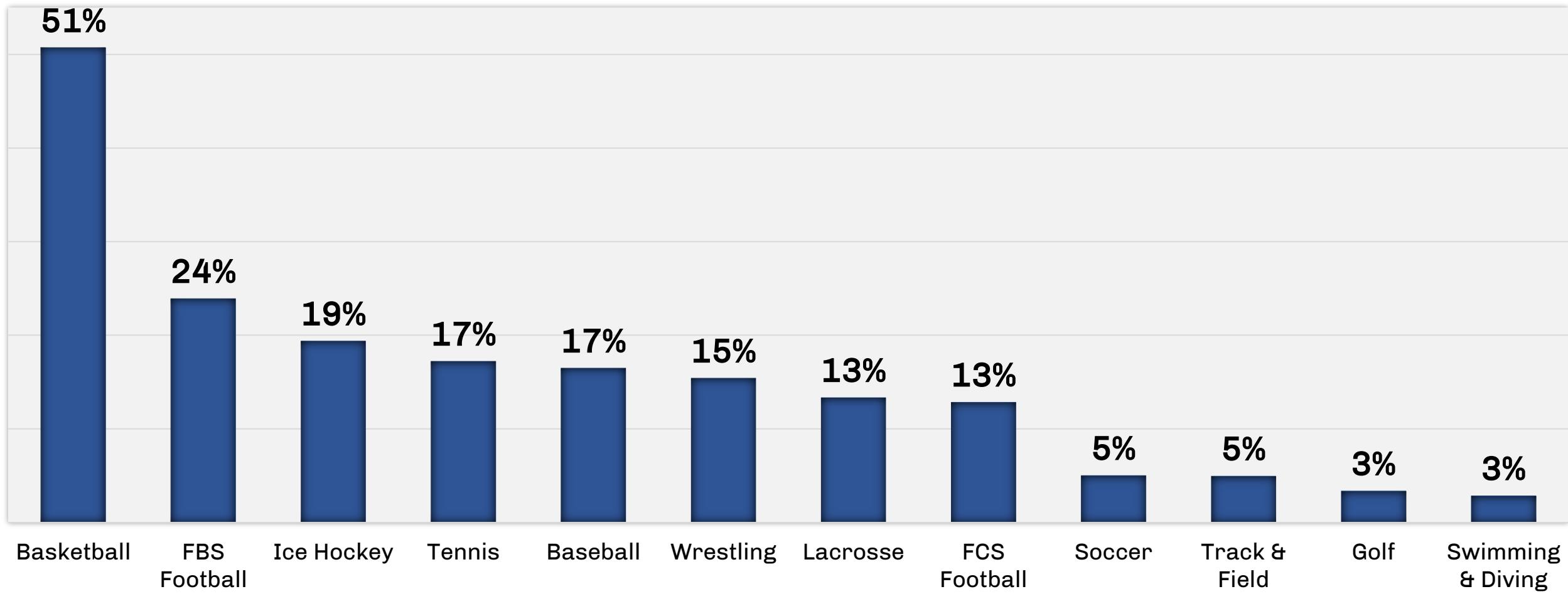
Received negative/threatening messages from someone who bet on your game?

10%



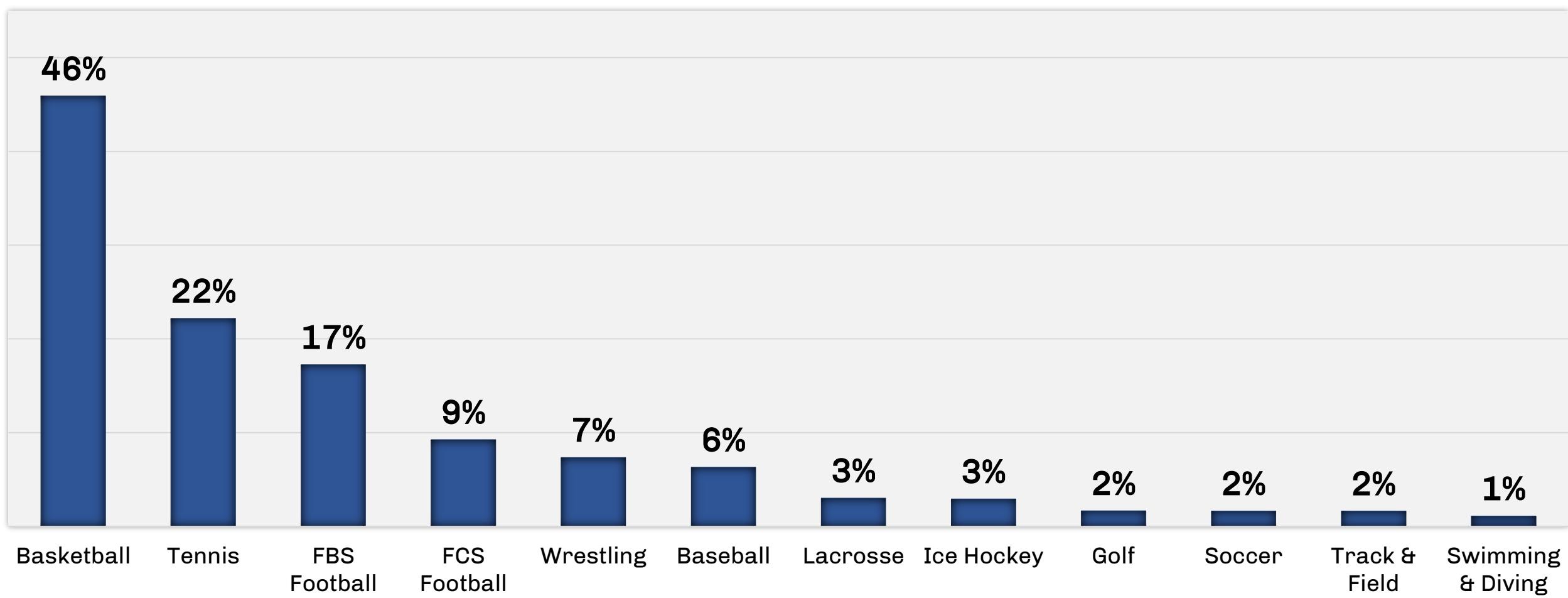
Have you ever been harassed on social media about your athletic performance?

(Percentage of Division I Men's Sports Participants Who Responded "Yes")



Have you ever received negative or threatening messages from someone who bet on your game (e.g., via social media)?

(Percentage of Division I Men's Sports Participants Who Responded "Yes")



**Student-athletes are feeling
optimistic about their ability
to reach future career goals.**



RESEARCH

“How do you feel about your ... ?”

(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Positive” or “Very Positive”)

Likelihood of
graduating college

Ability to reach
career goals

Ability to transition from
college to career

94% 97%

88% 87%

81% 77%

■ Men's Sports ■ Women's Sports

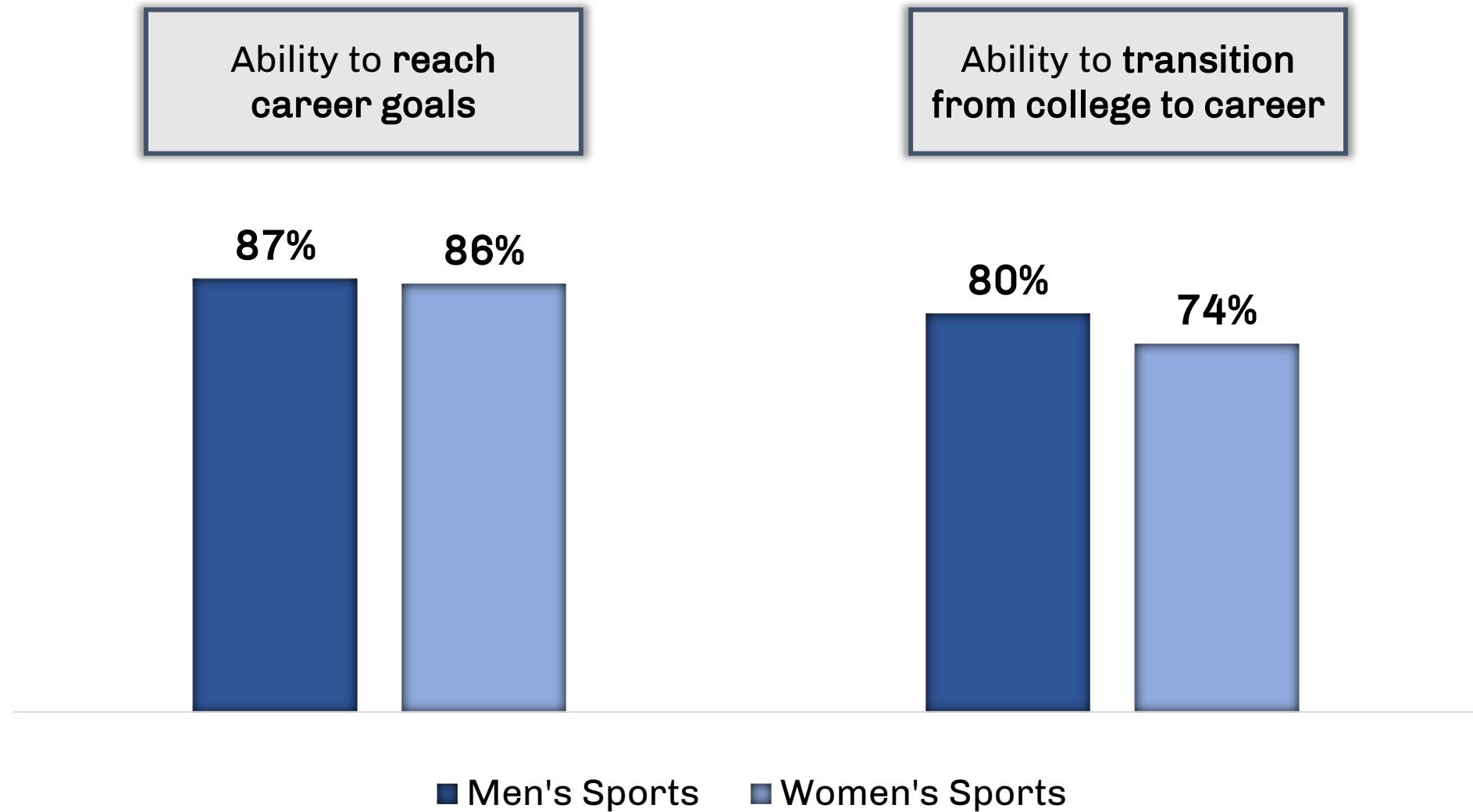
Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Participants who completed their bachelor's degree are excluded from the first item on graduating college. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



RESEARCH

“How do you feel about your...?”

(Percentage of Participants in their Junior Year or Later Who Endorsed “Positive” or “Very Positive”)



Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Participants who completed their bachelor's degree are excluded from the first item on graduating college. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



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Skills and Personal Qualities Honed Through the College Athletics Experience

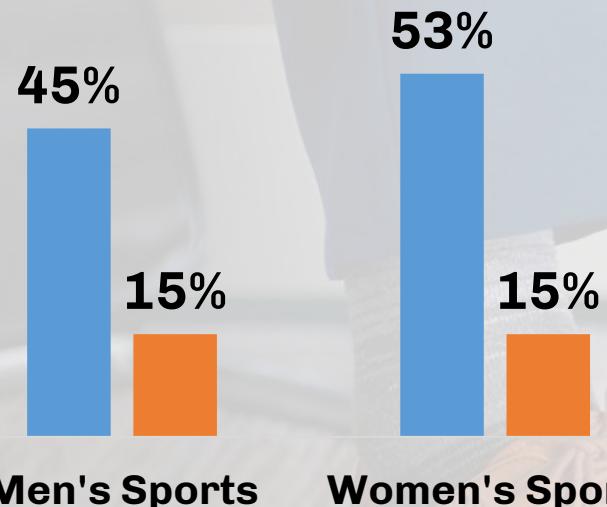
(Percentage endorsing that their college athletics experience has had a “positive” or “very positive” effect on the following)

Work ethic	94%	Dealing with change	82%
Ability to take responsibility for yourself	93%	Coping in high-pressure environments	81%
Teamwork	92%	Understanding of people of other races, identities & backgrounds	81%
Goal setting	89%	Self-confidence	69%
Leadership skills	87%	Commitment to community service	63%
Attention to detail	85%	Understanding when you're pushing yourself too hard	61%
Time management	84%	Ability to establish a desired image or personal brand	60%

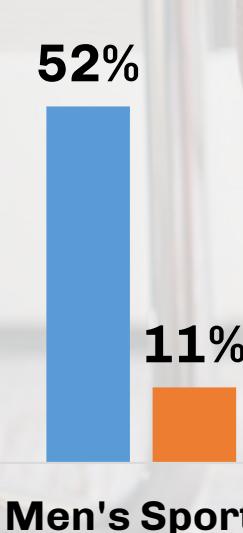
Internship Opportunities

(Those in their junior year and above)

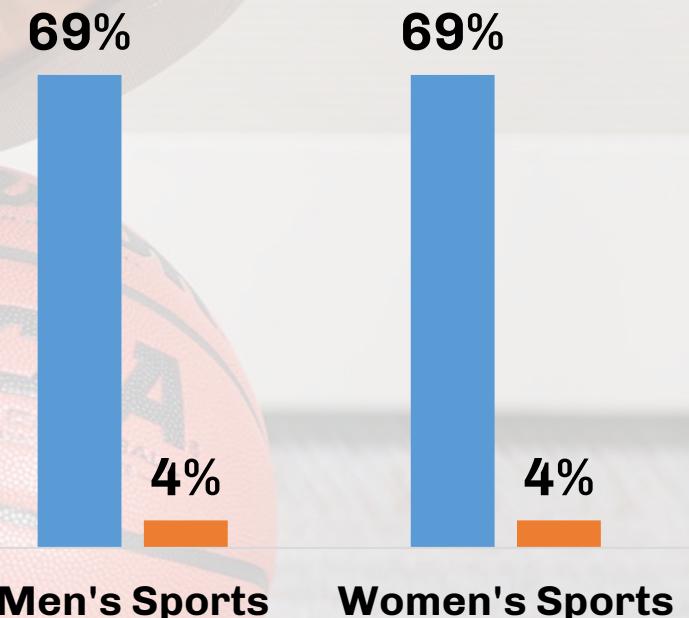
Division I



Division II



Division III



■ Yes, I have or will take part in an internship ■ Would like to, but can't because of sport

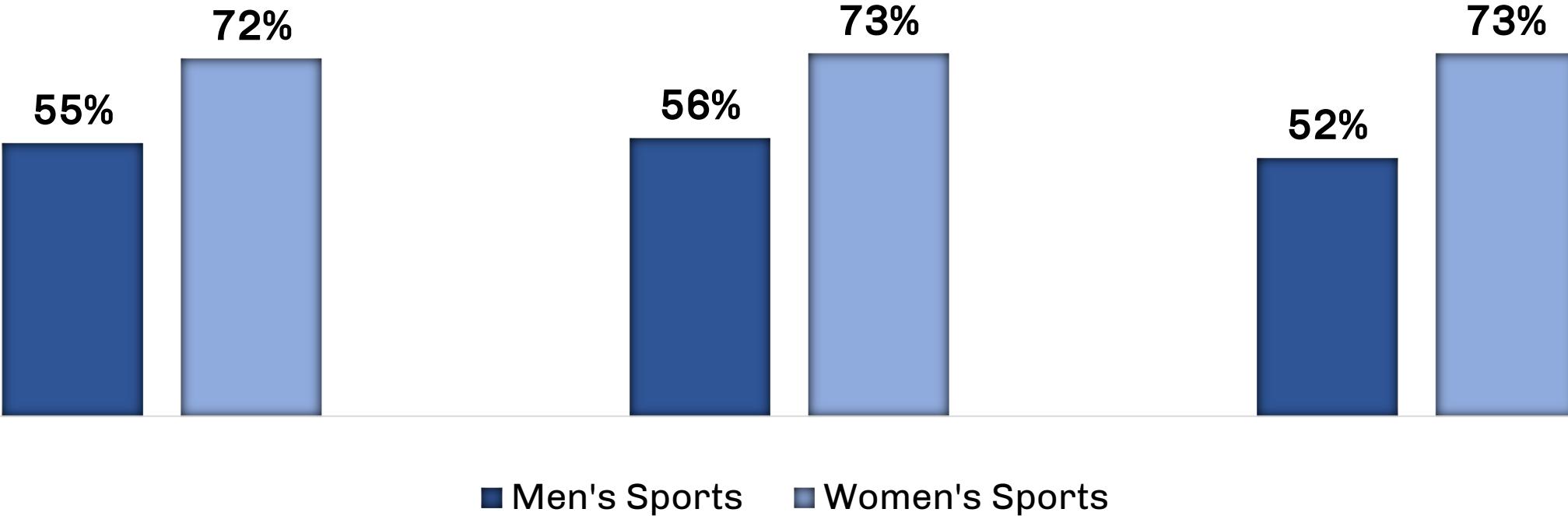
Likelihood of Attending Graduate School or Obtaining Advanced Professional Degree at Some Point After College

(Percentage Who Endorsed “Somewhat Likely” or “Very Likely”)

Division I

Division II

Division III



Note: Top 2 points on a 5-point scale. Participants who completed their bachelor's degree are excluded. Examples of advanced professional degree include law degree, medical degree, master's degree, doctorate, etc. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



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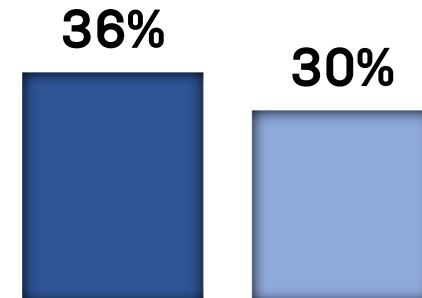
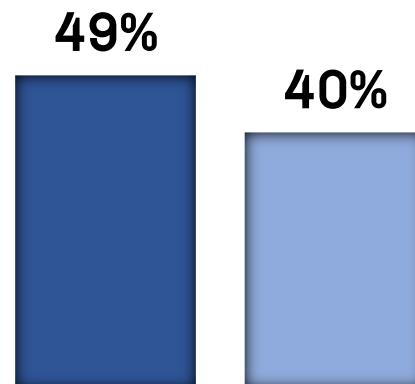
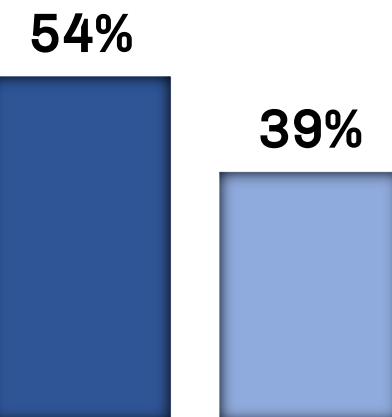
Likelihood That Job After College Will Involve Sports

(Percentage Who Endorsed “Somewhat Likely” or “Very Likely”)

Division I

Division II

Division III



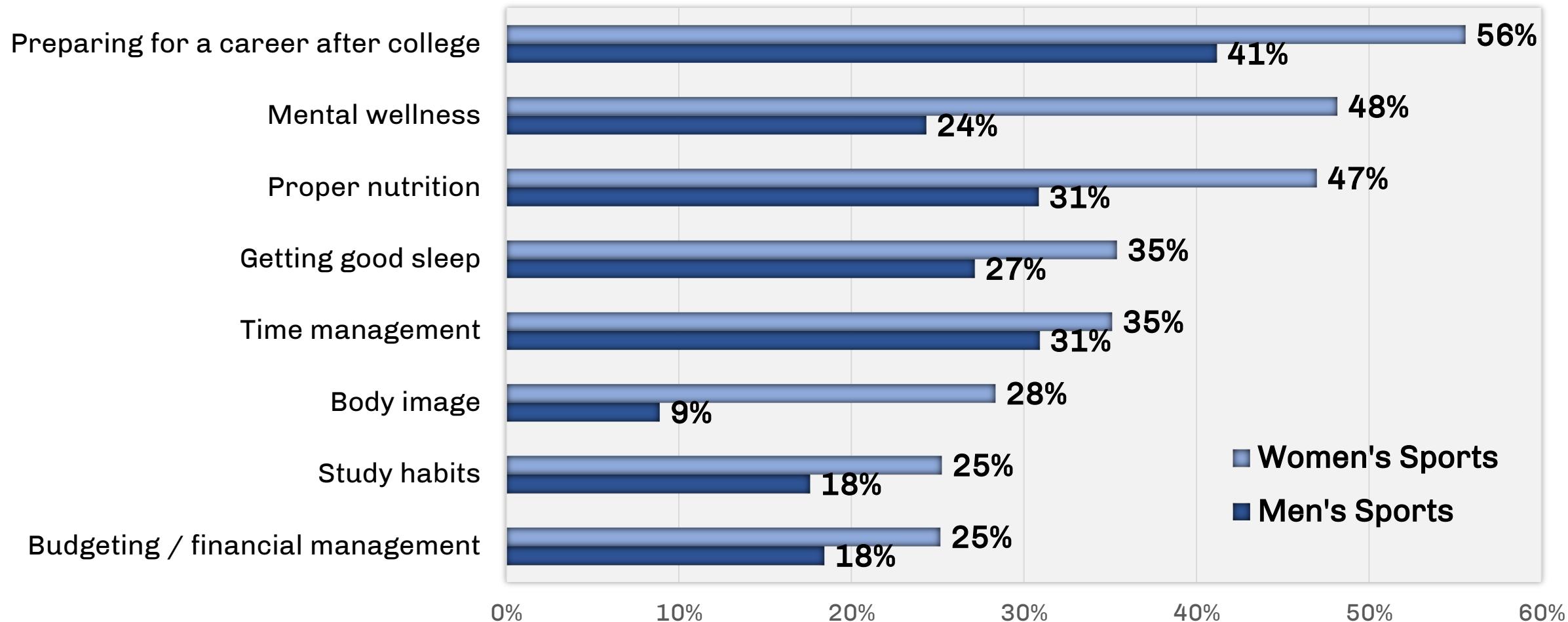
■ Men's Sports ■ Women's Sports

Note: Top 2 points on a 5-point scale. Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



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"I wish the coaches or athletics administrators at our school talked more with student-athletes about ..."



Note: Only topics endorsed by at least 25% of one sport gender are shown. Other topics included: academic resources (14% M, 21% W), navigating NIL opportunities (22% M, 21% W), living away from home (14% M, 18% W), finding professional opportunities in sport after college (18% M, 17% W), conducting ourselves appropriately on campus/in the community (11% M, 9% W), drinking/substance misuse (8% M/W), sexual violence prevention (3% M, 7% W) and concussion awareness (4% M, 6% W). Source: NCAA GOALS Study (2025).



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Next Steps

NEXT STEPS: GOALS Study Rollout

- Public-facing reports and slides on ncaa.org/research (winter/spring 2026).
- Additional opportunities:
 - NCAA committee meetings.
 - Possible academic collaborations for peer review.



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UPCOMING: NCAA FAR Study Release and Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study

► *2025 NCAA Faculty Athletics Representatives Study Release*



Results will be made available on our website this winter and shared via webinar from 1-2 p.m. Eastern time Feb. 4. Details for registration will be sent in early 2026.

► *2026-27 NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Study*



Fall 2026 launch. Explores a range of well-being topics (mental health, substance misuse, sleep, nutrition, body image, injury, etc.) to examine trends and emerging issues.

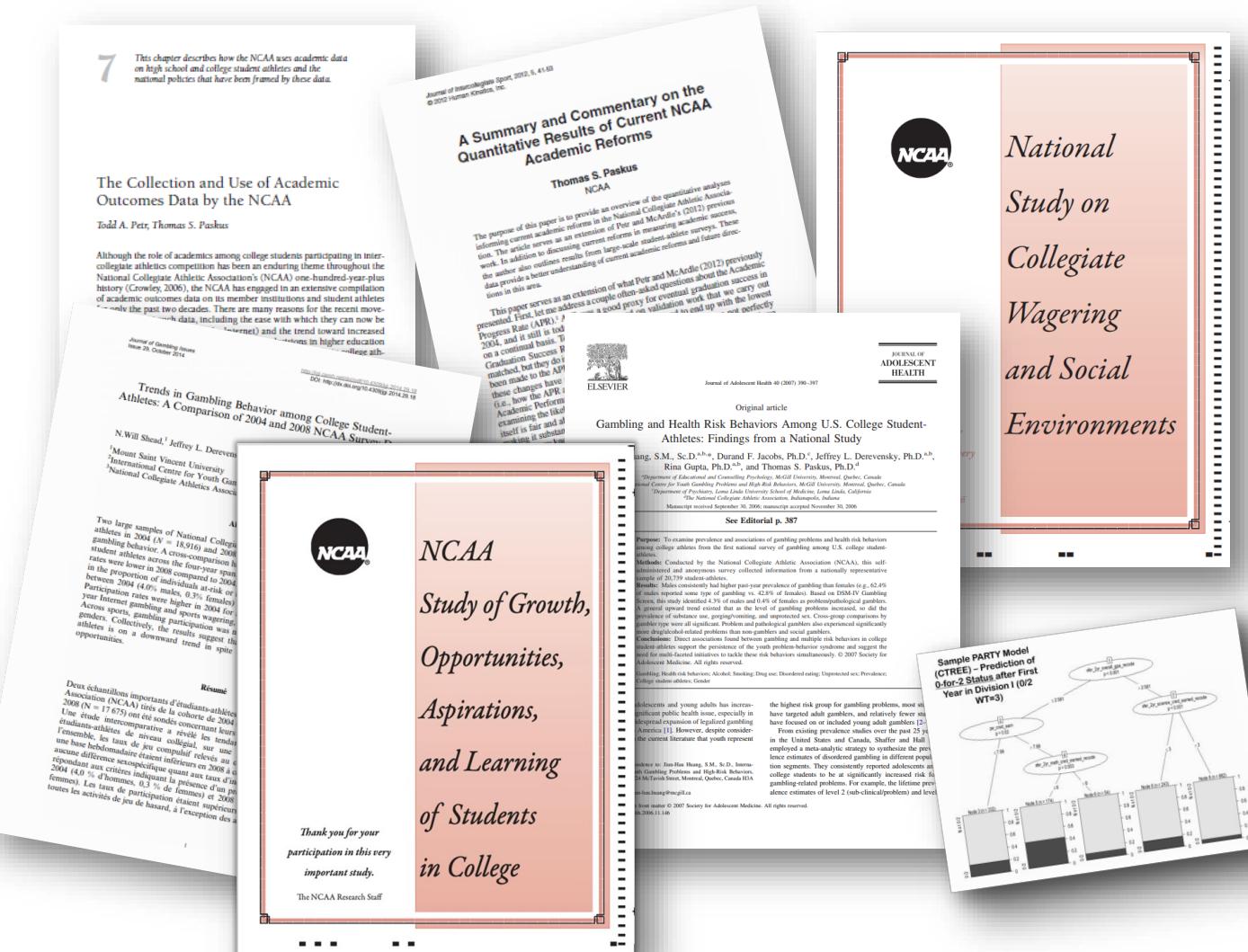


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Acknowledgement for Over Two Decades of NCAA Research Scholarship and Leadership



Tom Paskus, Ph.D.
Managing Director of Research,
Principal Research Scientist





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