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The 2020 SSF National Sports-Life Survey

Executive Summary March 2021, Japan



SASAKAWA SPORTS FOUNDATION

Overview

1 Introduction

In order to understand the level of participation in sports and physical activities by Japanese, the Sasakawa Sports Foundation (SSF) has examined the statistical data gathered through the "SSF National Sports-Life Survey", which has been conducted every other year since 1992. This survey measures the number of people aged 18 and over taking part in sports and physical activities across Japan in terms of frequency, duration and intensity. People take part in sports and physical activity in different ways, with many doing a range of activities including sports spectating, sports volunteering.

2 Survey design

- 1) Population: People aged 18 and over who live in Japan
- 2) Sample size: 3,000
- 3) Number of locations: 300 (89 in metro areas; 122 in cities with a population of over 100,000 people; 64 in cities with a population of less than 100,000 people; 25 in towns and villages)
- 4) Extracting method: Quota method

3 Survey period

August 28th - September 23rd, 2020

4 Survey methods

Leaving method:

The survey official visits the respondent, distributing the paper-based questionnaire and having the respondent fill out the survey within a certain period. The survey official then returns to the respondent to collect the survey.

5 Survey sample

3,000 (Male : 1,493, Female : 1,507)
18 • 19 years old 72 (Male : 37, Female : 35)
20-29 377 (Male : 193, Female : 184)
30-39 458 (Male : 235, Female : 223)
40-49 591 (Male : 301, Female : 290)
50-59 503 (Male : 253, Female : 250)
60-69 522 (Male : 256, Female : 266)
70 and over 477 (Male : 218, Female : 259)

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Description of terms

● Range of sports and physical activities

This survey measures a wide range of sporting activities including fitness activities, Strolling/Walking/Cycling for leisure or travel and dance. The school PE classes were excluded whilst sports club activities at schools and workplaces were included.

● Estimated participants

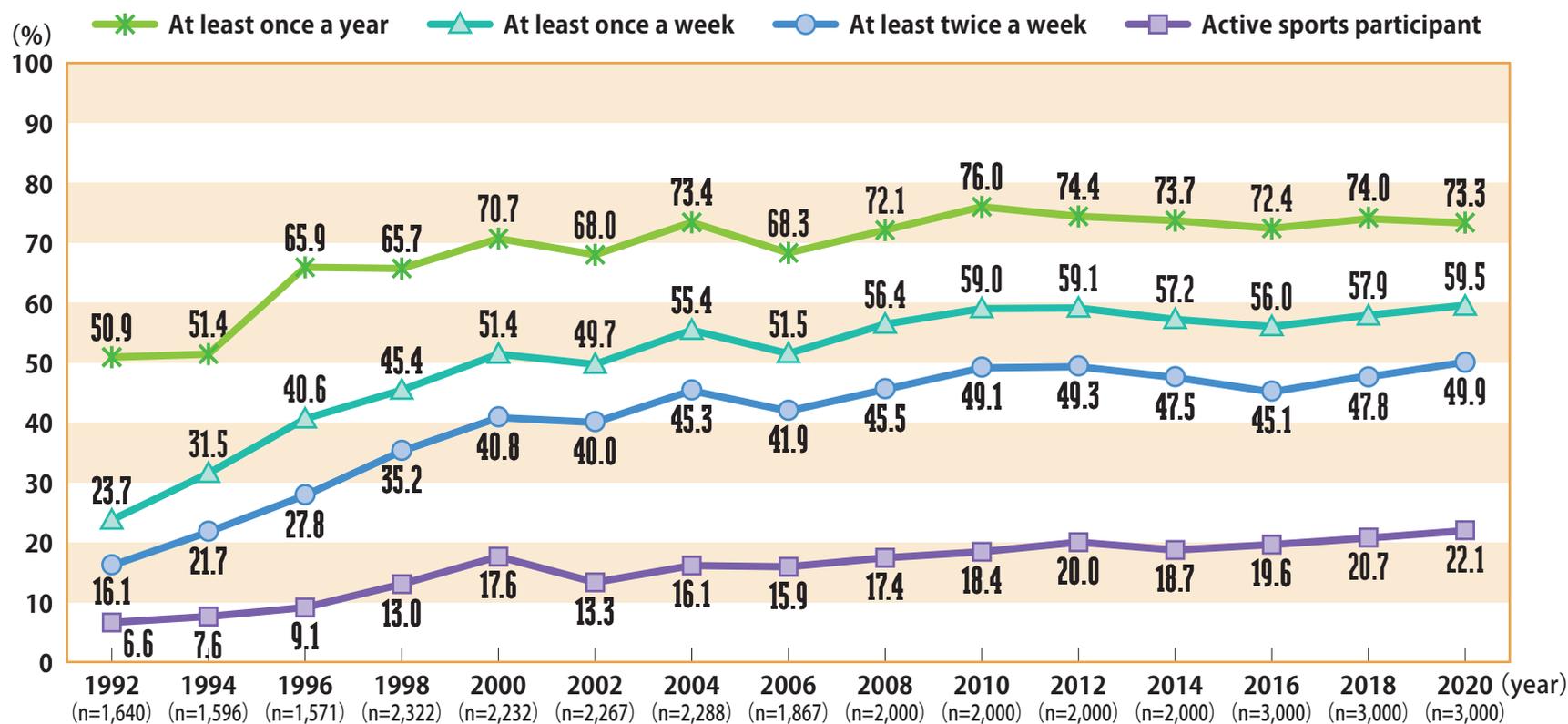
Estimated sports participants are calculated by applying the rate of regular sports and physical activities participation over the past year to the total population of those 18 and over (105,750,654 people in Japan).

● Level of participation in sports and physical activities

In this survey, the participation in sports and physical activities are divided into the following levels; "Level 0" for those who did not participate in any sports or physical activities for the past year; "Level 1" for those who participated at least once during the year, but less than twice a week; "Level 2" for those who participated at least twice a week; "Level 3" for those who participated at least twice a week with a duration of "more than 30 minutes"; and "Level 4" for those who participated at least twice a week, duration of "more than 30 minutes", and with more than moderate intensity.

Annual changes in sports and physical activities

Annual changes in sports and physical activities



Note 1: Until 2014, the survey targeted people aged 20 years and over; starting in 2016, it targeted those aged 18 years and over.

Note 2: Active sports participants are Level 4 people (those who participated for at least 30 minutes twice a week at moderate intensity or greater).

73.3% of people participated in sports and physical activities at least once in 2020.

The percentage of people who participate at least once a week has risen since 1992, from **23.7%** to **59.5%** in 2020.

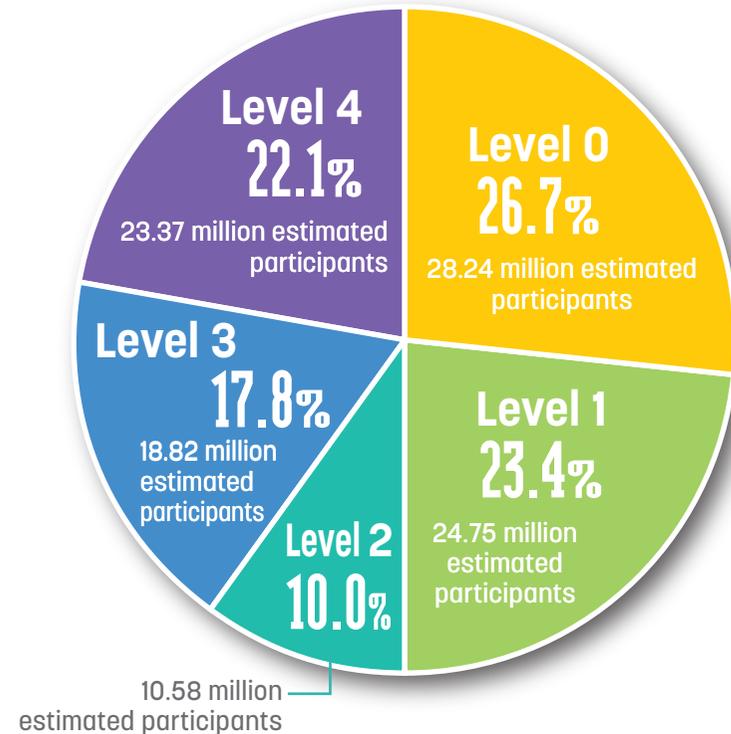
Similarly, the percentage for participation at least twice a week in 2020 was **49.9%**, continuing its climb from the **16.1%** recorded in 1992.

The number of active sports participants was at an all-time high of **22.1%**.

Definition of levels

Level	Definition
Level 0	For the past year, no sports/physical activities at all
Level 1	At least once a year, less than twice a week (1-103 times a year)
Level 2	At least twice a week (at least 104 times a year)
Level 3	At least twice a week, at least 30 min at a time
Level 4 (Active Sports Participant)	At least twice a week, at least 30 min at a time, moderate intensity at least slightly hard

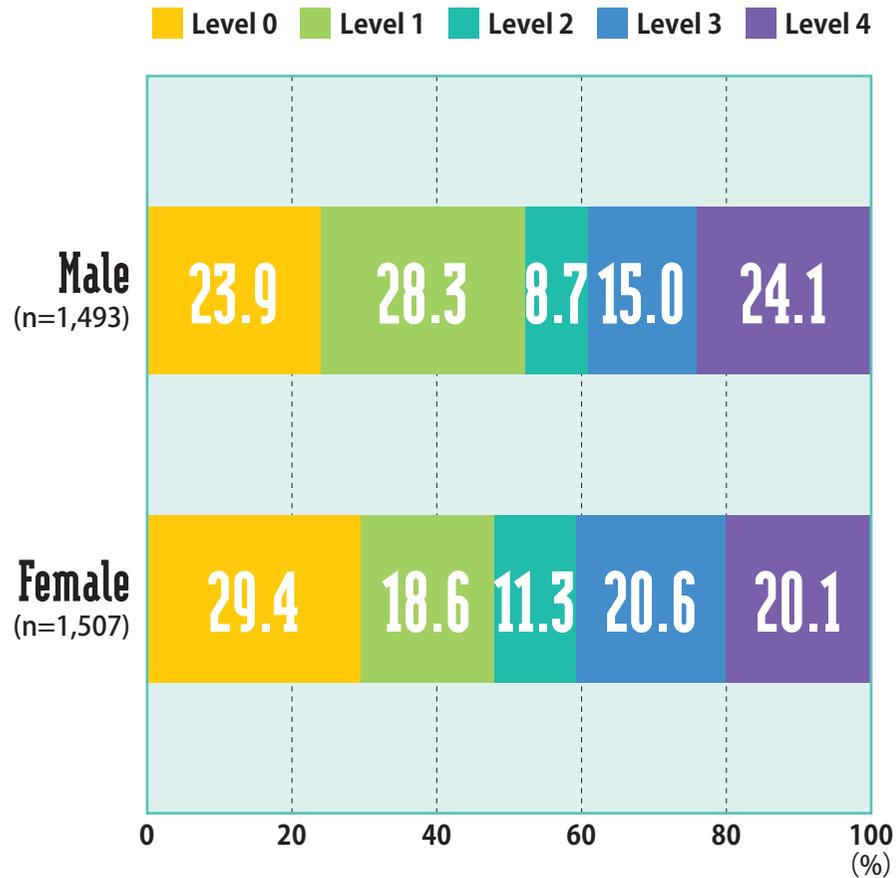
Levels of sports and physical activities



Note: The estimated number of participants was calculated by multiplying the total population of individuals aged 18 and over (105,750,654 people according to the basic resident register as of January 1, 2019) by the percentage for each participation level.

26.7% of people (28.24 million) were Level 0, meaning that they did not participate in sports and physical activities at all in the past year. **23.4%** of people (24.75 million) were Level 1, **10.0%** (10.58 million) were Level 2, and **17.8%** (18.82 million) were Level 3. **22.1%** of people (23.37 million) were Level 4, meaning that they participated with the most frequency and intensity.

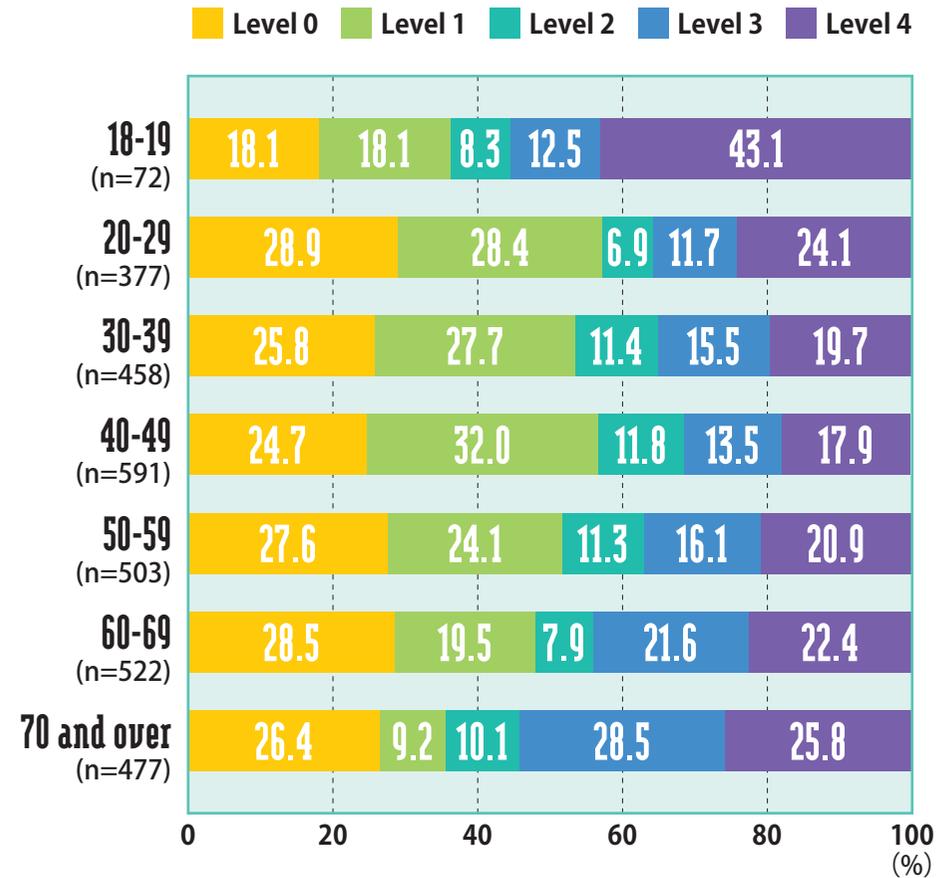
Levels of sports and physical activities : By gender



47.8% of males and **52.0%** of females participated in sports and physical activities at least twice a week (Level 2 or greater), with females holding a higher percentage by 4.2points.

23.9% of males and **29.4%** of females did not participate in sports and physical activities at all (Level 0), with females holding a higher percentage by 5.5points.

Levels of sports and physical activities : By age



Of the people who participated in sports and physical activities at least twice a week (Level 2 or greater), **63.9%** were aged 18-19, **42.7%** were in their 20-29, **46.6%** were in their 30-39, **43.2%** were in their 40-49, **48.3%** were in their 50-59, **51.9%** were in their 60-69, and **64.4%** were in their 70 and over.

The percentage of people who participated at least twice a week increased along with the percentage of people in their 40s and over who participated.

Types of sports and physical activities

Types of sports and physical activities

Total (n=3,000)			
Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Estimated participants (in 10,000s)
1	Strolling	32.9	3,479
2	Walking	28.3	2,993
3	Calisthenics and light exercises	19.4	2,052
4	Weight training	18.0	1,904
5	Jogging and Running	10.6	1,121
6	Fishing	7.8	825
7	Bowling	6.8	719
8	Cycling	6.6	698
9	Golf on a course	6.4	677
10	Jumping rope	6.3	666
11	Golf practice on a driving range	5.9	624
12	Playing catch	5.5	582
13	Swimming	5.4	571
14	Yoga	5.2	550
15	Badminton	5.1	539
16	Sea bathing	4.8	508
17	Mountaineering	4.5	476
18	Hiking	4.2	444
19	Table tennis	4.1	434
20	Football	3.9	412

Note: The estimated number of participants was calculated by multiplying the total population of individuals aged 18 and over (105,750,654 people according to the basic resident register as of January 1, 2019 in Japan) by the percentage for each participation level.

Of the sports and physical activities performed in the past year, "Strolling" came in first place at **32.9%** (34.79 million people), followed by "Walking" in second place at **28.3%** (29.93 million people), "Calisthenics and light exercises" in third place at **19.4%** (20.52 million people), "Weight training" in fourth place at **18.0%** (19.04 million people), and "Jogging and Running" in fifth place at **10.6%** (11.21 million people).

Types of sports and physical activities : By gender

Male (n=1,493)			Female (n=1,507)		
Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)
1	Strolling	28.1	1	Strolling	37.6
2	Walking	26.5	2	Walking	30.1
3	Weight training	19.4	3	Calisthenics and light exercises	25.7
4	Jogging and Running	15.3	4	Weight training	16.5
5	Fishing	13.3	5	Yoga	9.4
6	Calisthenics and light exercises	13.1	6	Jumping rope	8.0
7	Golf on a course	11.5	7	Jogging and Running	5.9
8	Golf practice on a driving range	10.0	8	Badminton	5.6
9	Bowling	8.6	9	Swimming	5.2
	Cycling	8.6	10	Bowling	5.0

Among females, participation in "Strolling", "Walking", "Calisthenics and light exercises", and "Weight training" was high.

For males, participation in those four activities as well as "Jogging and Running", "Fishing", "Golf on a course", and "Golf practice on a driving range" all exceeded 10%.

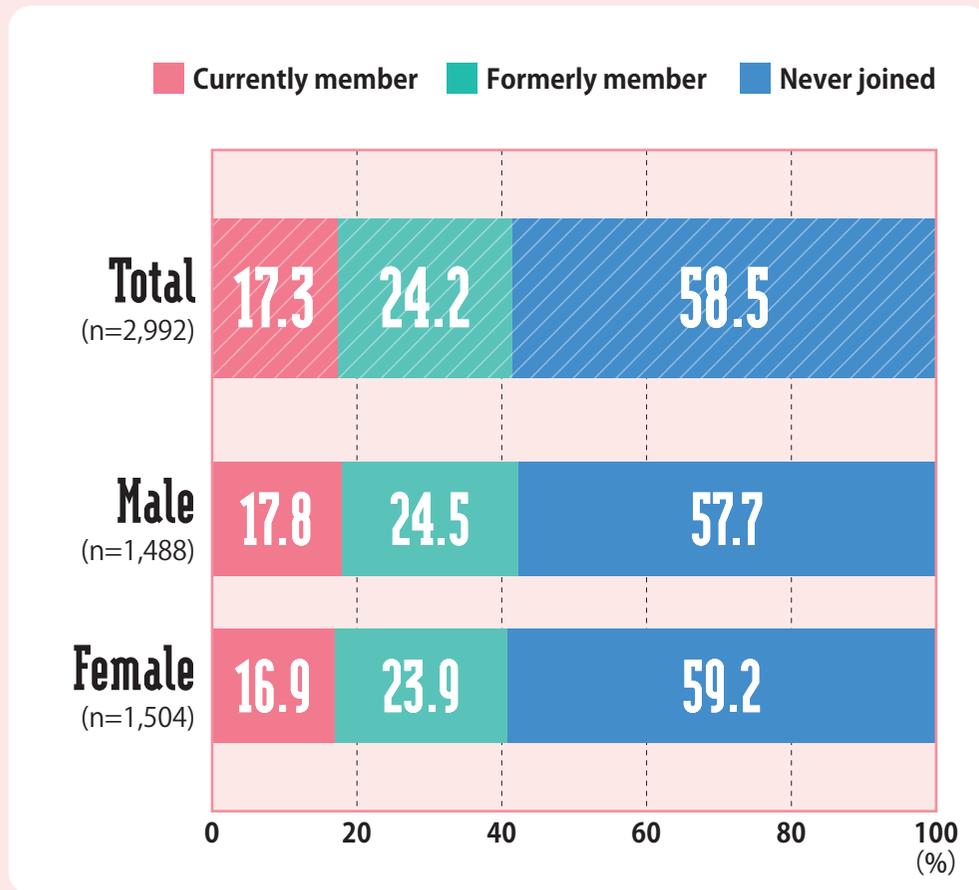
Types of sports and physical activities : By age

18-19 (n=72)			20-29 (n=377)			30-39 (n=458)			40-49 (n=591)		
Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)
1	Weight training	34.7	1	Strolling	30.0	1	Strolling	34.1	1	Strolling	30.1
2	Strolling	33.3	2	Weight training	29.7	2	Weight training	23.1	2	Walking	25.2
3	Jogging and Running	25.0	3	Walking	20.7	3	Walking	20.3	3	Weight training	16.2
4	Walking	20.8	4	Jogging and Running	17.8	4	Calisthenics and light exercises	17.0	4	Calisthenics and light exercises	16.1
5	Bowling	19.4	5	Bowling	13.0	5	Jogging and Running	14.2	5	Jogging and Running	12.5
6	Football	18.1	6	Calisthenics and light exercises	9.8	6	Jumping rope	12.0	6	Jumping rope	10.8
	Playing catch	18.1	7	Fishing	9.3	7	Bowling	9.2	7	Fishing	10.7
8	Badminton	16.7	8	Football	9.0		Swimming	9.2	8	Cycling	9.5
	Calisthenics and light exercises	16.7	9	Playing catch	8.8	9	Fishing	8.7	9	Badminton	9.3
10	Baseball	15.3	10	Badminton	7.7	9	Playing catch	8.7	10	Playing catch	7.4
				Sea bathing	7.7	9	Sea bathing	8.7			

50-59 (n=503)			60-69 (n=522)			70 and over (n=477)		
Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)
1	Strolling	35.4	1	Walking	34.7	1	Walking	38.4
2	Walking	29.8	2	Strolling	32.2	2	Strolling	35.6
3	Calisthenics and light exercises	20.1	3	Calisthenics and light exercises	22.6	3	Calisthenics and light exercises	29.8
4	Weight training	18.1	4	Golf on a course	10.5	4	Weight training	11.7
5	Jogging and Running	11.5	5	Weight training	10.2	5	Ground golf	6.9
6	Golf on a course	8.5	6	Golf practice on a driving range	9.0	6	Golf on a course	6.1
7	Golf practice on a driving range	7.4	7	Fishing	5.9		Hiking	6.1
8	Cycling	7.2	8	Hiking	5.7	8	Fishing	5.9
9	Mountaineering	6.8	9	Cycling	4.4	9	Golf practice on a driving range	5.2
	Yoga	6.8	9	Mountaineering	4.4	10	Yoga	5.0

Participation in "Strolling" and "Weight training" ranked high for people in their 18-19 until 30s, while "Strolling" and "Walking" were the first and second place for over 40s age group. Team sports such as "Football", "Basketball", "Baseball" and "Volleyball" were taken up by younger generation. "Jogging and Running" for those 30s to 50s, "Golf on a course" and "Golf practice at a driving range" for those over 50s ranked in top 10 sports and physical activities.

Sports club membership: Total and by gender

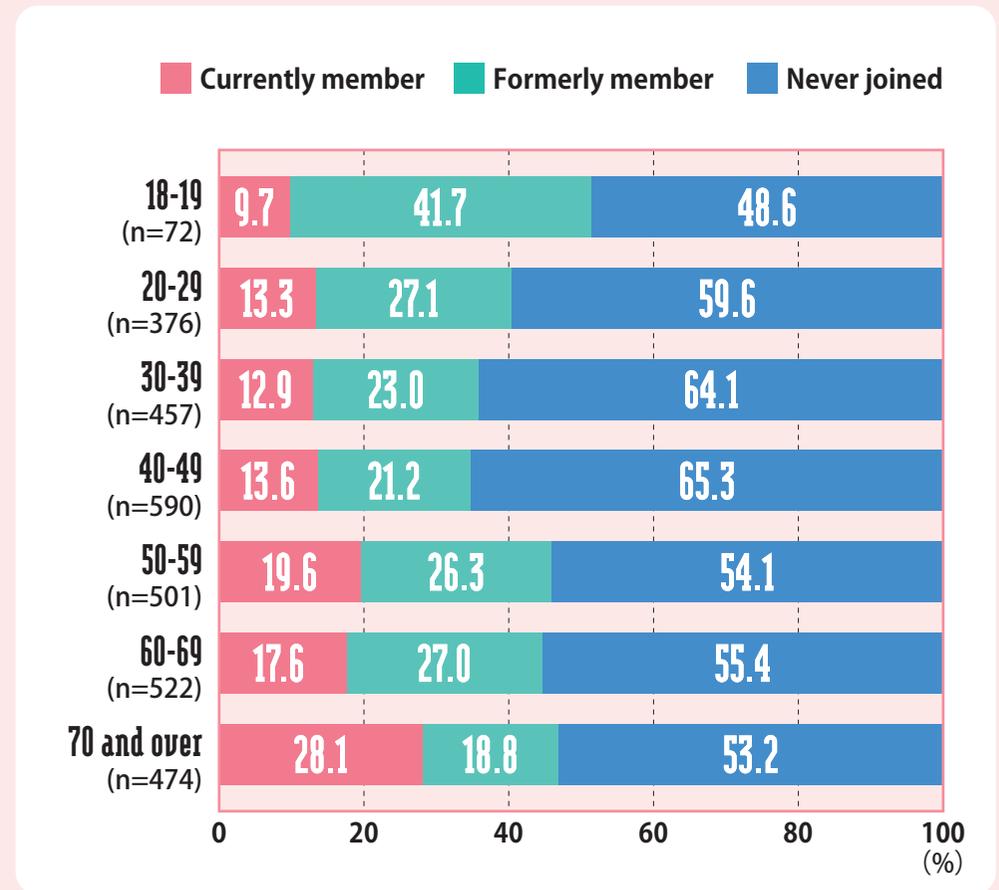


17.3% of people are members of sports clubs, **24.2%** are former members of sports clubs, and **58.5%** have never joined sports clubs.

In terms of gender, **17.8%** of males and **16.9%** of females are members of sports clubs.

This difference of 0.9points between males and females has narrowed since the first survey was conducted in 1992, when the gap was 8.6points.

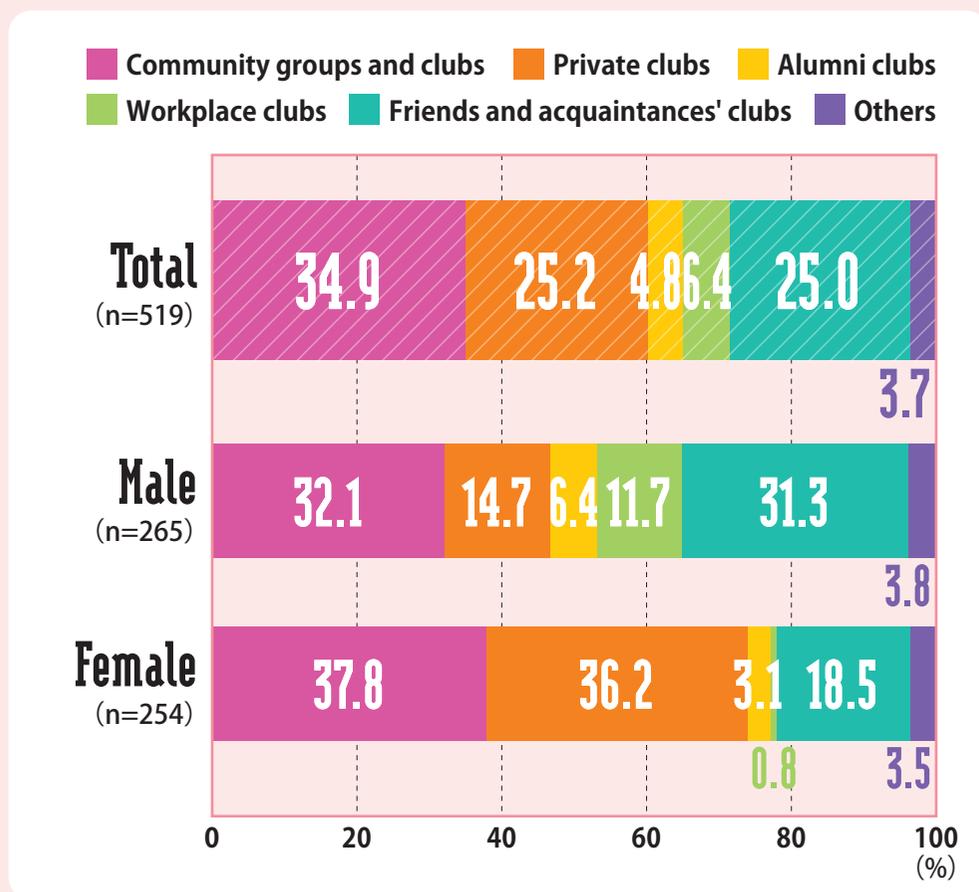
Sports club membership: By age



The rate of sports club membership of the people over the age of 70 (**28.1%**) was the highest, followed by those aged 50-59 (**19.6%**), those in their 60-69 (**17.6%**), and those in their 40-49 (**13.6%**).

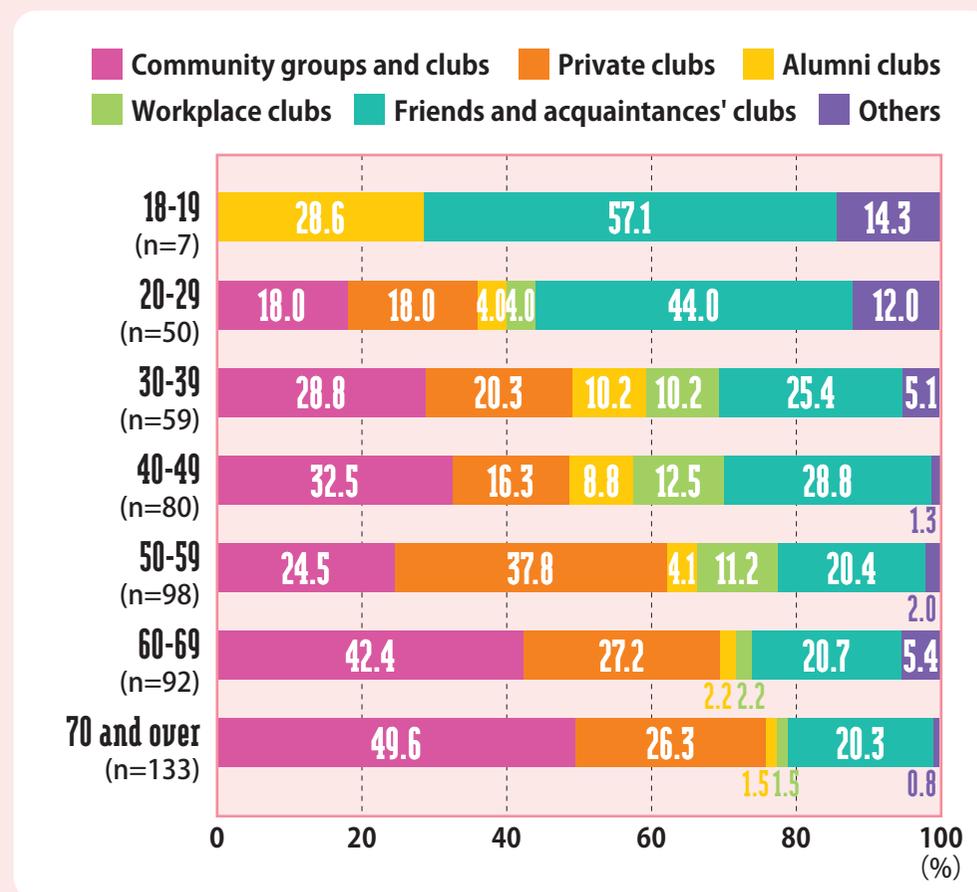
Those who are "Currently member" was uplifted after 50s and the rate showed a significant increase by people in their 70 and over.

Types of sports clubs : Total and by gender



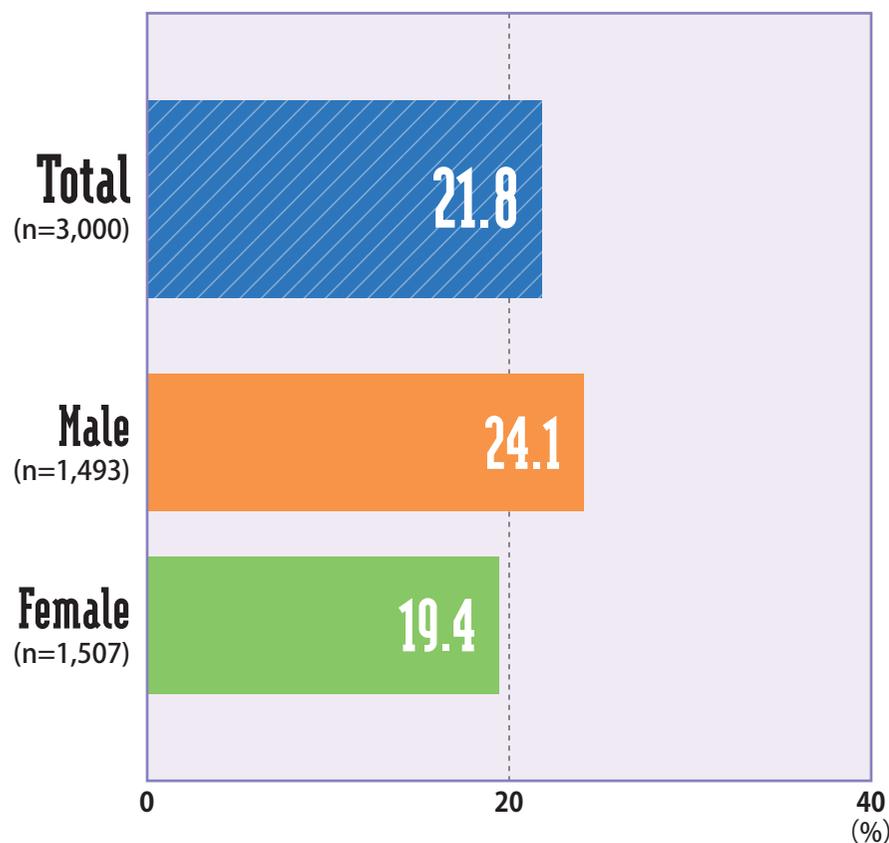
The rate of membership in "Community groups and clubs" was the highest at **34.9%**, followed by "Private clubs" at **25.2%** and "Friends and acquaintances' clubs" at **25.0%**. Among males, membership in "Community groups and clubs" was the highest at **32.1%**, followed by "Friends and acquaintances' clubs" at **31.3%** and "Private clubs" at **14.7%**. Among females, membership in "Community groups and clubs" was the highest at **37.8%**, followed by "Private clubs" at **36.2%** and "Friends and acquaintances' clubs" at **18.5%**.

Types of sports clubs : By age



The rate of membership in "Friends and acquaintances' clubs" was the highest among the younger age groups— **57.1%** for those aged 18-19 and **44.0%** for those in their 20-29. The membership rate in "Workplace clubs" for people in their 30-39, 40-49, and 50-59 was almost at the same level (**10.2 - 12.5%**). Starting with the 50-59 age group, membership in "Community groups and clubs" increased as age increased— **24.5%** for those in their 50-59, **42.4%** for those in their 60-69, and **49.6%** for those over the age of 70.

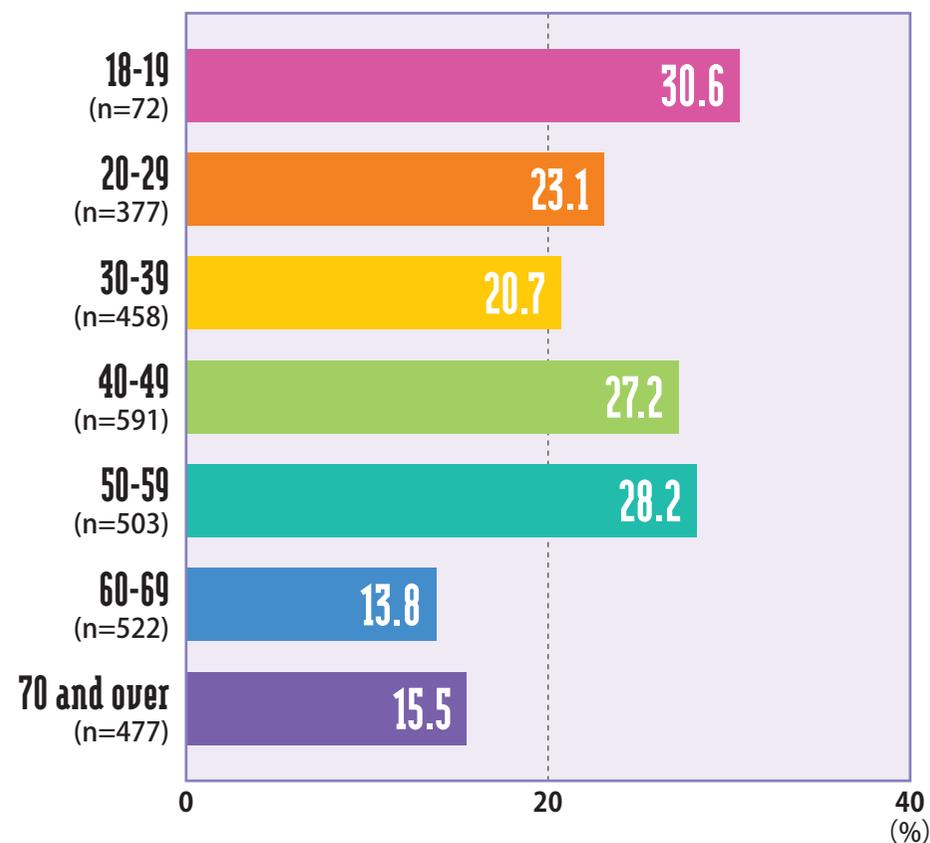
Live sports spectating : Total and by gender



The percentage of people who attended a live sporting event at a stadium or arena in the past year was **21.8%**. In terms of gender, **24.1%** of males and **19.4%** of females attended a live sporting event, a difference of 4.7points.

This trend of males attending live sporting events more than females has remained unchanged since this survey item was added in 1994.

Live sports spectating : By age



Live sports spectating was the highest for people aged 18-19 (**30.6%**), followed by those in their 50-59 (**28.2%**) and those in their 40-49 (**27.2%**).

This trend of a high percentage for these three age groups attending live sporting events was seen in the past surveys.

Live spectator sports types

Total (n=3,000)					
Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)	① Estimated spectators (in 10,000s)	② Frequency (times/year)	③ Estimated annual total (①×②) (in 10,000s)
1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	9.6	1,015	2.48	2,517
2	Professional football (J League)	3.3	349	2.85	995
3	High-school baseball	2.8	296	2.94	870
4	Marathon and Ekiden road relay	1.6	169	1.28	216
5	Football (High-school, University, JFL, etc.)	1.4	148	6.51	963

Note: The estimated number of participants was calculated by multiplying the total population of individuals aged 18 and over (105,750,654 people according to the basic resident register as of January 1, 2019 in Japan) by the percentage of each attendance level.

※NPB:Nippon Professional Baseball

“Professional baseball (NPB)” had the highest attendance rate at **9.6%**. It was followed by “Professional football (J League)” at **3.3%**, “High-school baseball” at **2.8%**, and “Marathon and Ekiden road relay” at **1.6%**.

Live spectator sports types: By gender

Male (n=1,491)			Female (n=1,509)		
Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)
1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	11.7	1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	7.6
2	High-school baseball	4.0	2	Professional football (J League)	2.8
3	Professional football (J League)	3.9	3	High-school baseball	1.7
4	Football (High-school, University, JFL, etc.)	1.6	4	Marathon and Ekiden road relay	1.5
	Marathon and Ekiden road relay	1.6	5	Basketball (High-school, University, WJBL, etc.)	1.4

※NPB:Nippon Professional Baseball

For both male and female, “Professional baseball (NPB)” had the highest attendance rate (**11.7%** for males and **7.6%** for females).

This was followed by “High-school baseball” in the case of males (**4.0%**), and “Professional football (J League)” in the case of females (**2.8%**).

Also, “Marathon and Ekiden road relay” ranked highly among both male (**1.6%**) and female (**1.5%**).

Live spectator sports types : By age

18-19 (n=72)			20-29 (n=377)			30-39 (n=458)			40-49 (n=591)		
Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)
1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	9.7	1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	11.9	1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	10.3	1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	9.3
	Professional football (J League)	9.7	2	Professional football (J League)	3.7	2	Professional football (J League)	5.5	2	Professional football (J League)	4.4
3	High-school baseball	8.3	3	High-school baseball	2.7		Football (High-School, University, JFL, etc.)	1.1	3	High-school baseball	3.4
4	Basketball (High-School, University, WJBL, etc.)	6.9	4	Volleyball (High-school, University, V League, etc.)	1.6	3	High-school baseball	1.1	4	Professional basketball (B League)	2.4
5	Football (High-School, University, JFL, etc.)	4.2	5	Marathon and Ekiden road relay	1.3		Professional basketball (B League)	1.1	5	Football (High-School, University, JFL, etc.)	2.2
				Rugby (High-school, University, Top League, etc.)	1.3						

50-59 (n=503)			60-69 (n=522)			70 and over (n=477)		
Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)
1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	11.9	1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	6.5	1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	8.6
2	High-school baseball	4.4	2	Professional football (J League)	1.5	2	High-school baseball	3.6
3	Professional football (J League)	4.0	3	Professional golf	1.1	3	Marathon and Ekiden road relay	2.3
4	Marathon and Ekiden road relay	2.8	4	High-school baseball	1.0	4	Sumo wrestling	1.3
5	Football (High-School, University, JFL, etc.)	2.6	5	Marathon and Ekiden road relay	0.8	5	Professional golf	0.8

※NPB:Nippon Professional Baseball

“Professional baseball (NPB)” had the highest attendance rate among all generations.

This was followed by “Professional football (J League)” and “High-school baseball” in second and third place for the age groups spanning 18 to 59; for age group ranging 60-69, “Professional football (J League)” then “Professional golf”, for people 70 and over, “High-school baseball” then “Marathon and Ekiden road relay” were second and third place respectively.

“Sumo wrestling” and “Professional golf” also made it into the top five for the group who aged 70 and over.

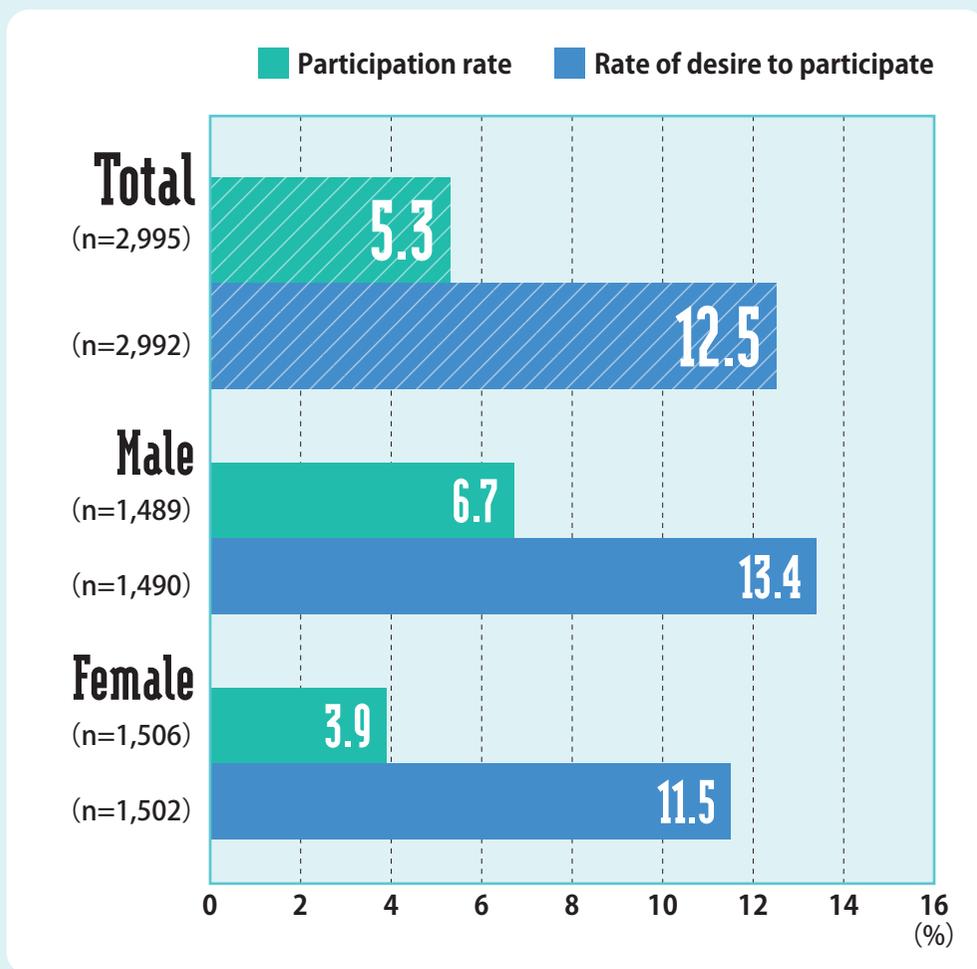
Types of sports spectating on TV : Total and by gender

Total (n=3,000)			Male (n=1,493)			Female (n=1,507)		
Rank	Types of sports	Viewing rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Viewing rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Viewing rate (%)
1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	48.7	1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	59.8	1	Figure skating	42.5
2	High-school baseball	36.4	2	High-school baseball	41.7	2	Professional baseball (NPB※)	37.6
3	Figure skating	30.2	3	Sumo wrestling	31.9	3	Marathon and Ekiden road relay	31.2
4	Marathon and Ekiden road relay	30.1	4	Marathon and Ekiden road relay	28.9	4	High-school baseball	31.1
5	Sumo wrestling	28.0	5	Japan national rugby team games	27.7	5	Sumo wrestling	24.2
	Didn't watch any sports on TV	19.9		Didn't watch any sports on TV	16.9		Didn't watch any sports on TV	22.8

※NPB:Nippon Professional Baseball

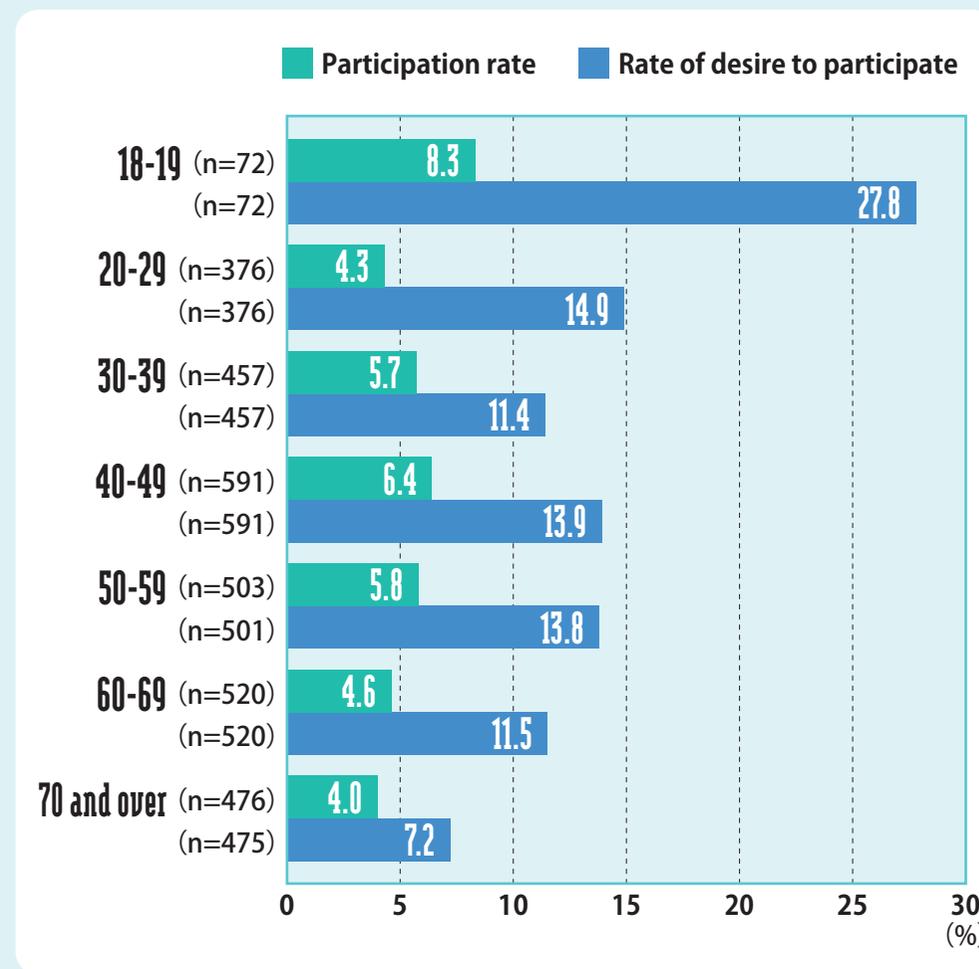
Of the sports that were watched on TV in the past year, the most popular was "Professional baseball (NPB)" at **48.7%**, followed by "High-school baseball" at **36.4%**, "Figure skating" at **30.2%**, "Marathon and Ekiden road relay" at **30.1%**, and "Sumo wrestling" at **28.0%**. Among males, "Professional baseball (NPB)" was the most watched on TV at **59.8%**, followed by "High-school baseball" at **41.7%** and "Sumo wrestling" at **31.9%**. Among females, "Figure skating" was the most watched on TV at **42.5%**, followed by "Professional baseball (NPB)" at **37.6%** and "Marathon and Ekiden road relay" at **31.2%**.

Sports volunteering : Total and by gender



5.3% of people participated in sports volunteering in the past year. The rate has slightly decreased compared to the first survey in 1994, which was 6.1%. In terms of gender, **6.7%** of males and **3.9%** of females participated in sports volunteering. This trend of higher volunteer participation among males than females was also seen in past surveys.

Sports volunteering : By age



The sports volunteering participation rate was the highest for people aged 18-19 (**8.3%**), followed by those in their 40-49 (**6.4%**), and those in their 50-59 (**5.8%**). The rate of desire to participate was also the highest for people aged 18-19 (**27.8%**), followed by those in their 20-29 (**14.9%**) then those in their 40-49 (**13.9%**).

A think tank whose every dream and action is taken with the future in mind.

The activities of the Sasakawa Sports Foundation (SSF) are aimed at creating a "Sport for Everyone society" in which everyone enjoys sports in a manner that fits their own lifestyle and interests.

Sports not only have the power to maintain and improve mental and physical health, but also the mysterious ability (value) to act as a universal remedy that helps people grow and encourages the formation of society.

As we see changes in demographic movement that are unprecedented anywhere in the world, Japan faces a variety of social issues. SSF is working to utilize scientific investigation and research to convert that mysterious ability into objective and easy-to-understand data and language and develop projects and programs that help as many people as possible enjoy their lives through sports, and projects and programs that help solve social issues, among other things.

Last year, Rugby World Cup 2019 filled Japan with excitement, and we saw an increase in interest not only in rugby, but in sports in general. Then, just as that momentum was moving forward to the Tokyo Olympics/Paralympics, and expectations were high for an increase in the number of people participating in sports, the novel coronavirus began to spread, and we were hit with the stagnation of social activity worldwide. In the "new normal" (our new lifestyle under the coronavirus peril), socio-economic activities continue to be limited, and our sports environment has also been subject to enormous restrictions. SSF's ingenuity and ability to take action toward achieving a Sport for Everyone society are now being tested.

It is also likely that our battle against changes in the global environment and the accompanying natural disasters and communicable diseases will continue as well. As we reflect on history, we see that we have faced a variety of threats in the past as well. In 2011, following the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, there were concerns regarding the health of evacuees. These included the issue of children getting insufficient physical exercise. However, many individuals and organizations working together gradually reduced the problem.

It is impossible to completely eliminate all crises faced by the human race. What is important is to establish a mobile system that makes it possible for people to work together in such a manner at any time, and to spread that system throughout the world. SSF believes that difficulties are an opportunity to do so, and we will focus even more effort on achieving a society in which as many people as possible can enjoy the power of sports and live healthy lives.

Fortunately, we have already built a broad network of personal connections, and have a rich store of information and knowledge. We will utilize, enhance, and expand these to move forward with convincing cross-disciplinary research based on the insights of both the social sciences and the natural sciences, and return the findings to society as quickly as possible through collaboration with a variety of individuals and organizations. Let us do this to achieve a Sport for Everyone society which we aim at.

**Kazutoshi Watanabe, President
Sasakawa Sports Foundation**

Outline of Activities

1. Research and surveys

The Institute of Sports Policy, established in SSF carries out fact-finding surveys, case studies and empirical research. The institute gathers and analyses quantitative data and advanced cases in the country as well as overseas, which are essential for the national government and local governments to draft sports policy and for various organizations to plan sports promotion programs. SSF proactively makes proposals for policies to governments and for plans to sports organizations, based on evidence obtained from the research and survey.

2. Collaboration with local governments

SSF promotes a nationwide sport program, which aims to encourage people to participate in sports and physical activities, called Challenge Day. In this program, municipal communities with similar size of populations compete over the percentage of their residents who did some kind of sports and physical activities for a minimum of fifteen minutes on the last Wednesday of May. Through Challenge Day, SSF is able to forge closer links with local governments and other organizations, and to verify that sports are beneficial in building local communities and promoting relationships between people of different generations, and to propose a system in which individual residents can enjoy sports in their communities. Furthermore, in collaboration with local governments who participate in Challenge Day and with other local governments nationwide, SSF draws up sports promotion plans for local communities and offers the results of its surveys and research.

3. Public relations

SSF disseminates the information about its initiatives as described above, and releases the latest sports information in the country and overseas that is beneficial for sports policy research, through its official website, social media, symposiums, seminars, and international conferences. As part of its public relations activities, SSF publishes the results of the National Sport and Lifestyle Survey, which is biannually conducted to understand the state of participation and involvement in sports by Japanese, by means of a report called the SSF National Sports-Life Survey. SSF also brings out and extensively distributes Sport White Paper, in which the latest data in the country and overseas is printed.

The 2020 SSF National Sports-Life Survey

Executive Summary

March 2021, Japan

