



**Figure 1: Types of Programs in Dorchester Offering Sports and Physical Activities to Youth (1999-2000)**

Type of Program	Number in Dorchester	Number in Boston	% in Dorchester
Non-Profit	24	155	15%
For Profit	1	18	6%
Boston Public School	4	35	11%
Non-public School	2	15	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>223</b>	<b>14%</b>

**Play Across Boston (PAB)** is a project of the Harvard Prevention Research Center at the Harvard School of Public Health undertaken in collaboration with Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society and a broad-based Community Advisory Board. PAB has worked since 1999 to describe youth sports and physical activity programs in Boston. Due to limited documentation of the local challenges to physical activity and sport promotion, **Play Across Boston** conducted a comprehensive community-based assessment of physical activity resources for Boston youth. In addition, we collected data concerning the presence and condition of publicly accessible parks, facilities and playgrounds in 12 Boston neighborhoods<sup>1</sup>. For more detailed information, please refer to the full Play Across Boston Report ([www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc)).

As we work with our partners toward creating greater opportunities, **Play Across Boston** data provide a solid basis upon which to achieve our goals of improving community health and reducing disparities in physical activity access and participation. This **Active Facts** outlines the types of recreational programs and facilities available to **Dorchester** youth.

### Youth Sports and Physical Activities in Dorchester

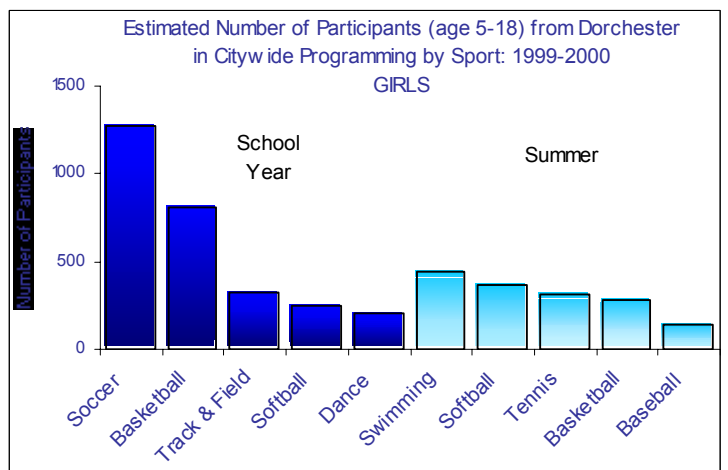
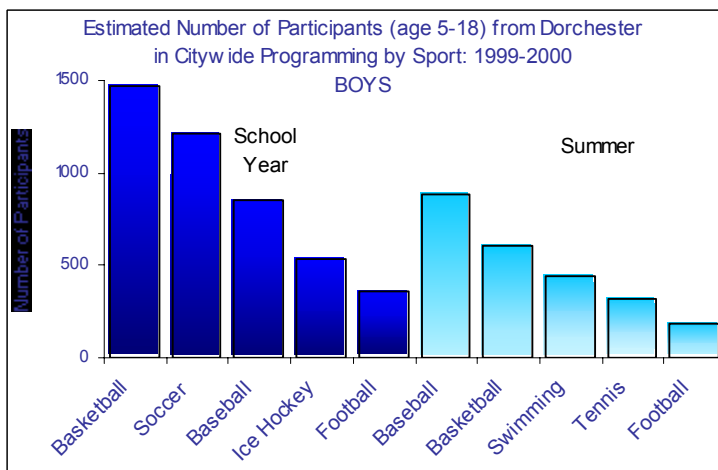
In 1999-2000, 31 different sports and physical activity programs<sup>2</sup> located in Dorchester responded to the **Play Across Boston** survey. Of those 31 programs, many were non-profit and nearly one-third did not charge a participation fee. Of the non-profit programs, most were league sports, comprised of multiple teams playing a single

sport. Figure 1 describes the types of programs available in Dorchester and Boston overall.

As for participation in citywide programs, Dorchester youth represent about 18% of all youth sports and physical activity participants in Boston, yet comprise 21% of Boston's 95,251 5-18 year olds. This means that youth from Dorchester participate at lower levels than youth from other Boston neighborhoods. Of the many sports and activities offered throughout the city, basketball appears to be the favorite for boys during the school year and baseball appears to be the favorite for boys during the summer. Girls preferred soccer during the school year and swimming during the summer. In Dorchester, boys have a greater level of sports participation than girls.

<sup>1</sup> Data for some Boston neighborhoods were combined for the purposes of the Play Across Boston Report

<sup>2</sup> Includes only those programs who responded to the Play Across Boston Survey



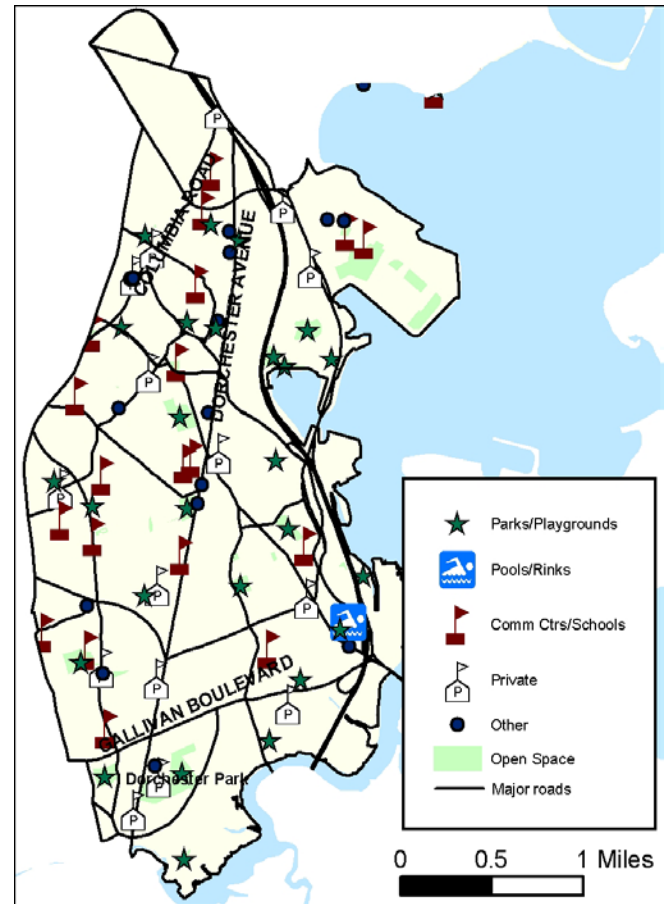
## Parks, Playgrounds and Athletic Facilities in Dorchester

As Boston's largest and oldest neighborhood, Dorchester is filled with many parks, playgrounds and other facilities for youth sports and recreation. In 2000-2001, PAB surveyed 31 different public recreational complexes in Dorchester to document the types of facilities and amenities available. These sites included 19 parks and playgrounds operated by the Parks & Recreation Department, 7 parks and 1 ice rink maintained by the former MDC, now the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and 4 Boston Community Schools (community centers housed within Boston Public Schools). In total, these complexes housed 30 basketball courts (22 full basketball courts), 12 softball fields, 6 baseball fields, 6 Little League fields, 9 tennis courts, 3 pools, 1 football field, 1 soccer field, 1 ice rink, and more! In addition, several private facilities in Dorchester host youth sports activities, including the Daniel Marr Boys & Girls Club and the Dorchester YMCA. Assessments of playground quality indicate that Dorchester playgrounds ranked average.

### Dorchester has...

- 30 Basketball Courts
- 24 Playgrounds
- 12 Softball, 6 Baseball, and 6 Little League Fields ... and more!

## Recreational Facilities in Dorchester



## Public Recreational Facilities in Dorchester

	Dorchester	Boston	% in Dorchester
<b>Overall Recreational Complexes</b>	31	230	13%
<b>Ball Fields</b>			
Baseball	6	36	17%
Softball	12	69	17%
Little League	6	46	13%
Football	1	11	9%
Soccer	1	33	3%
Cricket	1	5	20%
Other Field	2	9	22%
<b>Ball Courts</b>	0		
Tennis	9	92	10%
Basketball (Full)	22	155	14%
Basketball (1/2 -court)	8	29	28%
Street Hockey	4	17	24%
<b>Other Recreational Facility Types</b>			
Pool	3	28	11%
Ice Rink	1	13	8%
Studio	1	7	14%
Other Recreational Facility	2	35	6%
<b>Playgrounds</b>			
Playgrounds	24	155	15%
Schoolyard Initiative Sites	5	29	17%
<b>Total</b>	108	809	13%

## Future Directions in Dorchester

Despite the resources available to its youth, Dorchester ranks low out of the 12 Boston neighborhoods<sup>1</sup> in its facilities per youth ratio, indicating that relative to other neighborhoods in Boston, each facility in Dorchester serves a greater number of youth. Furthermore, Dorchester ranks average in participation rates in sports and physical activity programs. Thus, in the future to improve the opportunities for youth sports in Dorchester, Play Across Boston recommends that additional resources be allotted to increase the number of facilities and encourage more youth, especially girls, to participate in available programs.

Information for this publication was obtained from Play Across Boston, Census 2000, and the City of Boston's website.

For more information on programs available in your neighborhood, please contact:  
 Boston Centers for Youth & Families  
 617-635-4920  
[www.cityofboston/bcyf](http://www.cityofboston/bcyf)  
 or  
 The Mayor's Youthline  
 617-635-2240  
[www.bostonyouthzone.com](http://www.bostonyouthzone.com)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
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