

# SUBSIDIZATION OF RACE ENTRY FEES LOWERS BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN 5K RACES IN CHILDREN 14 AND UNDER

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## BACKGROUND

Children achieve benefit from participation in sport in terms of both mental and physical health as well as improved school performance. In fact, the CDC recommends that children and adolescents complete 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily to include aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening exercise.



However, despite the known benefits of exercise participation, children are leading an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, which raises their risk of obesity, chronic disease, and poor performance in school.

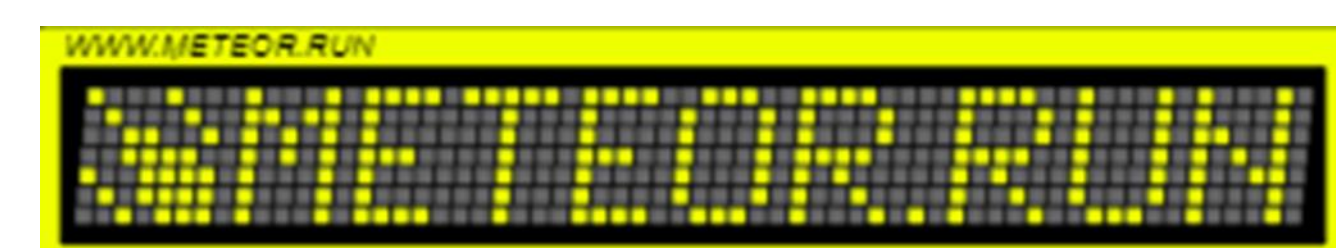
Cost and time have been identified as key barriers to participation in sports by children, and it has been suggested that reduced cost/fees for participation may increase children's involvement in sports.

The goal of this study was to determine whether a greater percentage of children participated in sports when the costs/fees were reduced via waivers. We focused on children age 14 and under because that is a common age grouping in race results and race fees by children in this age group are most often paid by the parents.

## DATA ACQUISITION

Public databases were analyzed for national and regional 5K participation.

- meteor.run (national database compiling statistics for 5K distance events)
- oksportsandfitness.com (online public database providing individual race information)
- tatur.org (public database providing individual race information)



## METHODS

5K participation data were collected using online public databases for the following groups:

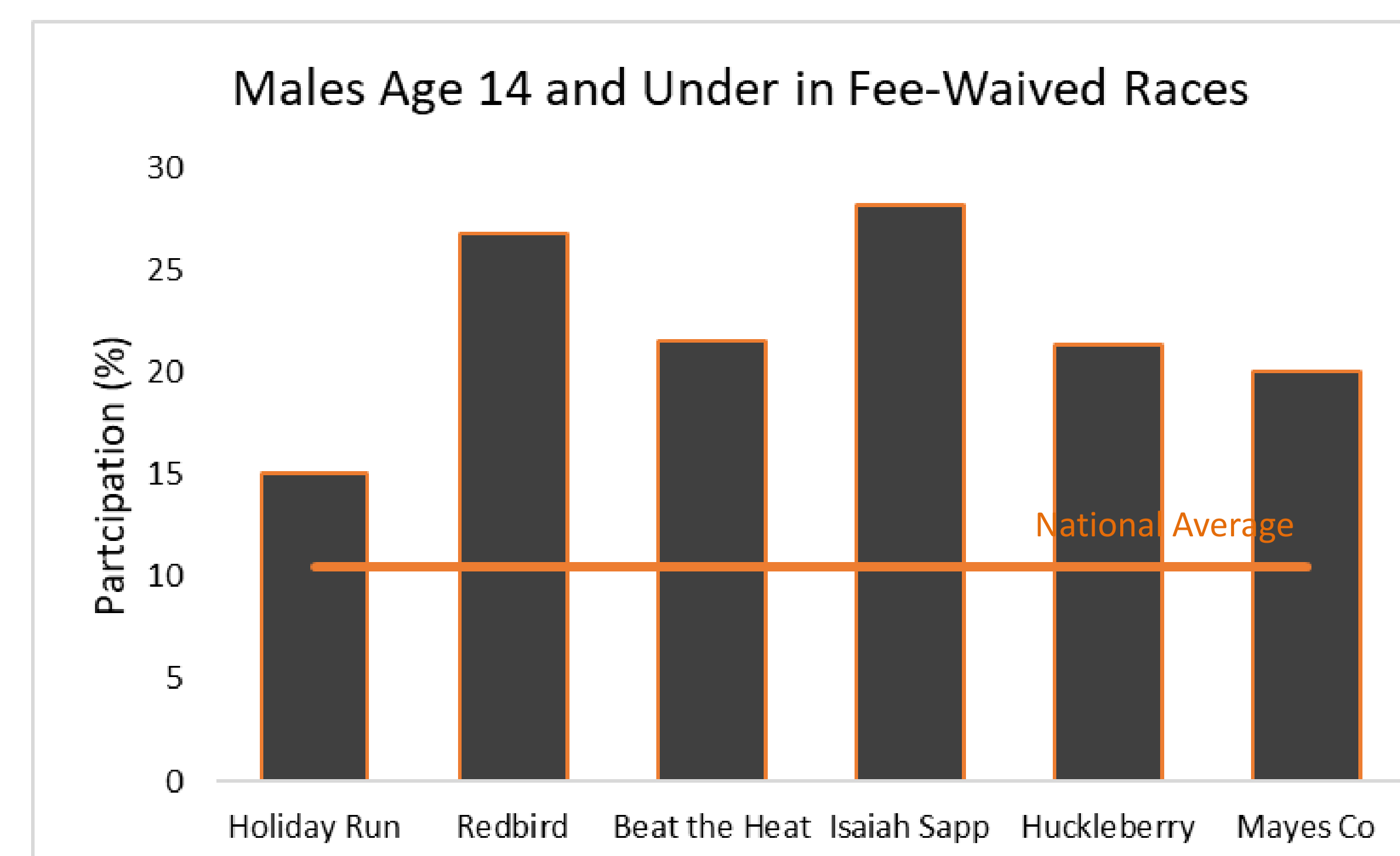
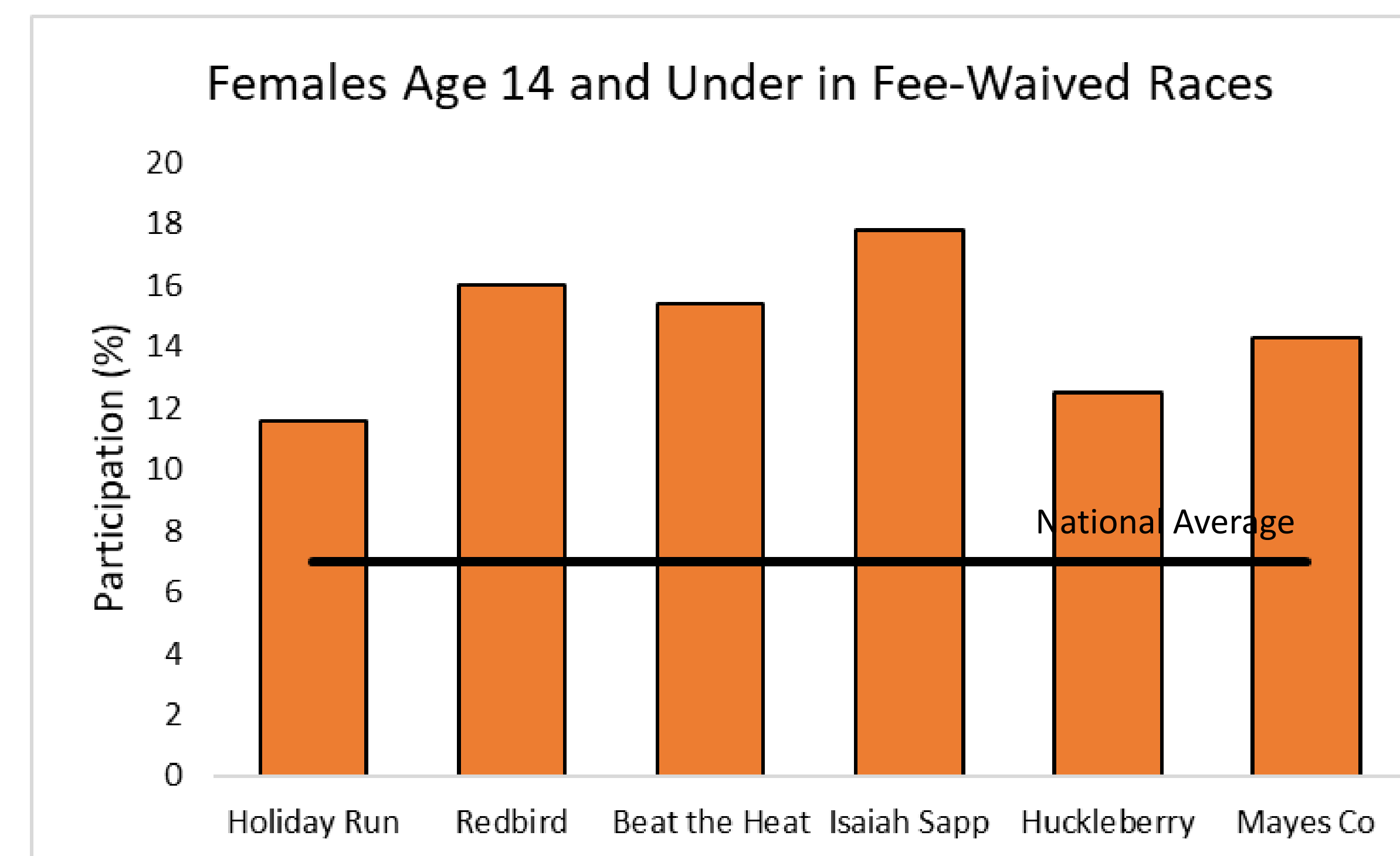
1. Females age 1-14 (national average)
2. Males age 1-14 (national average)
3. Females age 1-14 (fee-waived)
4. Males age 1-14 (fee-waived)

Selected 5K races offering a fee waiver:

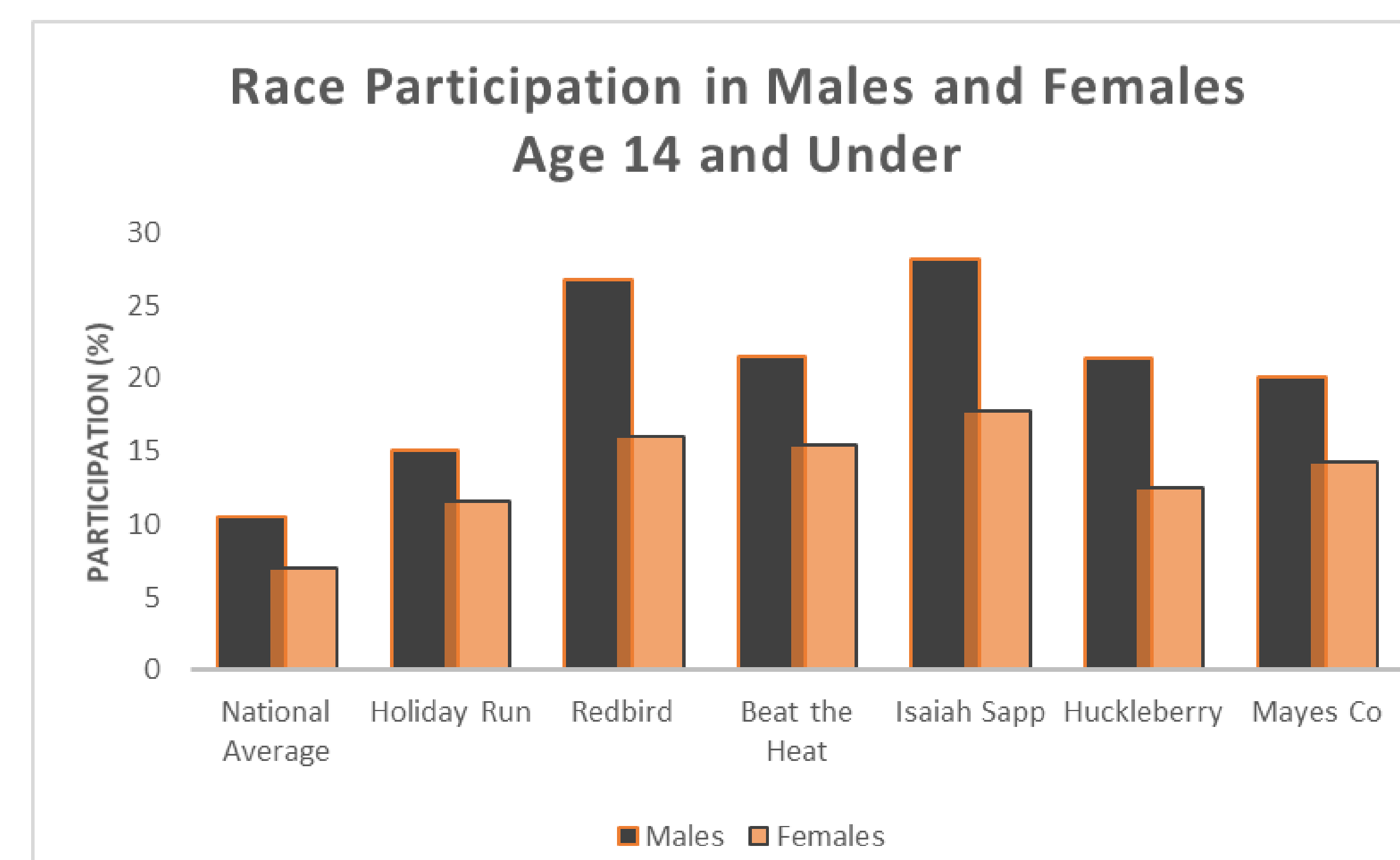
- Cherokee Holiday Run*
- Redbird Run*
- Beat the Heat 5K*
- Isaiah Sapp*
- Huckleberry Run*
- Mayes Co Hope*

5K participation by males and females age 14 years and under in the selected fee-waived races was compared to the national average participation by males and females of the same age group determined from meteor.run.

## RESULTS



Nationally, female participation in 5K races is 7% and male participation is 10.5%.



In selected races where fee waivers were offered, participation for females ranged from 11.6-17.8% and 15.1-28.2% for males.

## CONCLUSION

The races where fee waivers were available took place at different times during the school year and summer. These races occurred during differing weather conditions and in different cities/areas around northeastern Oklahoma. There is a commitment necessary by parents to enroll the children (and themselves if desired) into the wellness program in order to receive the race fee waivers and there is a requirement to attend the races once registered. **However, despite the membership, registration, and attendance requirements, children are still motivated to sign up, train for, and participate in the races at a greater rate if their fees are paid.**

➤ **Policy makers, teachers, and parents should be aware that 'cost' and 'time' are key barriers to participation in sports for children.**

➤ **More opportunities are needed where costs are reduced and this analysis illustrates an effective method for increasing participation in running by reducing costs via fee waivers.**

