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2023-24 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report: NCAA Division I Basketball

Men's Division I Basketball average AGG = -22.7

Women's Division I Basketball average AGG = -14.6

Columbia, SC – March 11, 2024... The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, released its fourteenth-annual National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I men's and women's basketball Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) report today. For the fourteenth consecutive year, basketball player graduation rates continue to be significantly below adjusted full-time student body graduation rates. The overall AGG for Division I men's basketball players is -22.7, indicating that the overall average graduation rate among Division I conferences is 22.7 percentage points below the men's full-

time student body rate. Similarly, the overall AGG for Division I women's basketball players is -14.6, or 14.6 percentage points below the women's full-time student rate. Among the 31 Division I basketball conferences, only one men's AGG was positive (Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference [MEAC] +1.8) and two Division I women's basketball conferences had positive AGGs (MEAC +5.4, Patriot League +0.6). Additionally, **Major** Conferences continue to perform significantly worse than **Mid-Major** Conferences (See Tables 1 & 2).

While the AGG of Division I Black men's basketball players had a modest year-to-year improvement of 0.3 and 0.6 percentage points among Major and Mid-Major Conferences, respectively, AGG trends continue to be especially troubling for Black Division I men's basketball players (See Charts 5 & 6.). Of note, the gap between Black (-36.6) and White (-25.1) men's basketball players in Major Conferences has increased in the past year. While last year's gap between Black and White Division I men's basketball players was the smallest AGG gap ever recorded (7.3 percentage points), this year's gap increased by 4.2 percentage points to 11.5. In addition, the AGG of Major Conference White men's basketball players improved 3.6 percentage points from last year to -25.1.

The gap between Black (-19.1) and White (-14.1) men's basketball players in Mid-Major Conferences increased for the second consecutive year. However, the AGG of Black men's basketball players in Mid-Major Conferences decreased by 0.6 percentage points while the AGG of White men's basketball players decreased by 1.6 percentage points from the previous year. Overall, Mid-Major men's basketball AGGs exhibited a moderate improvement of 1.6 percentage points from the previous year.

Overall, the Mid-Major women's basketball AGG decreased by 0.9 percentage points, while the Major Conference AGG decreased by 1.4 points. In addition, the White Mid-Major women's AGG increased by 1.6 percentage points from the previous year. While the Black Mid-Major women's basketball players' AGG (-13.2) decreased for the first time in three years, it has nearly doubled since 2020. Notably, the AGG of Black women's basketball players in Major Conferences remained relatively constant (-22.8), while the AGG of White players in Major Conferences improved by 3.3 percentage points (-17.0).

At one end of the AGG spectrum, among all Division I conferences, the MEAC (a conference comprised of Historically Black College and University [HBCU] institutions) continues to graduate both men's and women's basketball players at rates comparable to those of full-time students attending MEAC schools. In fact, for just the second time in the past decade, the MEAC is the only conference to have positive AGGs in both men's (+1.8) and women's (+5.4) basketball.

Among Major Conferences, the Atlantic 10 Conference has the smallest men's basketball AGG (-29.4), while the Pacific-12 Conference (Pac-12) women's basketball AGG (-4.5) is the smallest among women's conferences. Conversely, among Division I basketball conferences, the American Athletic Conference (AAC) has the largest overall men's AGG (-43.1) and the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) the largest overall women's (-30.4). Notably, the AGG of AAC men's basketball players increased for the fifth consecutive year, representing a 11.1 percentage point increase over the past five-years.

It is worth noting the potential impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, loosening of Division I transfer restrictions, and the transfer portal on AGGs. The current 4-class cohort includes a 2021-2022 graduating class that was significantly impacted by COVID-19 disruptions. Additionally, less restrictive transfer rules and the utilization of the transfer portal has triggered an influx of transferring athletes. Since the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) retains transfers as part of a school's cohort, in all likelihood this growth in transferring athletes increases the number of "left eligible" players, decreasing the number of players graduating at their initial schools, which is reflected in greater AGGs.

While the gap between Division I men's and women's basketball players' graduation rates and those of full-time male and female students has been consistently large in the fourteen-year history of the AGG, determining the impact of the less restrictive transfer era and pandemic disruptions on Division I men's and women's basketball AGGs are areas in need of further research.

Study Highlights

(See tables and charts in appendix for additional information.)

DI Women's Basketball AGG Summary

- ❖ The overall DI women's basketball AGG remains sizable at -14.6 percentage points.
- ❖ DI women's basketball AGG (-14.6) is 8.1 points better than DI men's basketball AGG (-22.7).
- ❖ The DI women's basketball Major Conferences AGG of -20.9 percentage points is 9.3 points worse than the Mid-Major AGG of -11.6 points.
- ❖ The -3.3 gap between Black and White DI women's basketball players is a decrease from last year, while the gap between Black and White DI men's basketball players (-6.1) is an increase.
- ❖ For the third consecutive year among DI women's basketball Major Conferences, the best performers (i.e., conferences with the smallest negative AGGs) were the Pac-12 (-4.5) and Big East (-15.6).
- ❖ The MEAC (+5.4) and the Patriot League (+0.6) are the only DI women's basketball conferences that have positive AGGs.

DI Women's Basketball AGG Trends

- ❖ While DI women's basketball AGGs exhibited moderate improvement (+1.0) for the fourth consecutive year, the gaps between athletes and the full-time student body are still large.

DI Men's Basketball AGG Summary

- ❖ The overall DI men's basketball AGG remains large at -22.7 percentage points (i.e., the DI men's basketball graduation rate is 22.7 points below the general male student body rate).
- ❖ The DI men's basketball Major Conferences AGG of -34.7 percentage points is much larger than the Mid-Major Conferences AGG of -17.1 points.¹
- ❖ The DI men's basketball Major Conference Black AGG of -36.6 percentage points is 11.5 points worse than the White AGG of -25.1. The Mid-Major Black-White gap is 5.0 points.
- ❖ Among DI men's basketball Major Conferences, the best performers are the Atlantic 10 (-29.4) and the Big East (-29.5).
- ❖ Among all DI men's basketball conferences, the best performers are the MEAC (+1.8) and the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) (-6.4). Notably, both are HBCU conferences.
- ❖ The MEAC is the first DI men's basketball conference to have a positive AGG in the past ten-years.

¹ Major and Mid-Major designations follow those on collegeinsider.com.

- ❖ Among all DI men's basketball conferences, the worst performers are the American Athletic Conference (AAC) (-43.1) and ACC (-41.9).
- ❖ For the Power-5 Conferences, the average men's basketball AGG of -36.1 is nearly double that of the football AGG of -18.6, a difference of 17.5 percentage points.²

DI Men's Basketball AGG Trends

- ❖ DI men's basketball AGGs continue to show a gradual but statistically significant negative trend over the thirteen-years of the AGG Report (i.e., the gaps between DI men's basketball and the full-time student body graduation rates remain large).

CSRI Position on Graduation Rates

In 1990, Congress mandated full disclosure of graduation rates at schools that award athletically related aid and receive federal financial aid. The Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) reflects the percentage of students (athletes and non-athletes) who graduate within six years from the school where they initially enrolled as a full-time student. The FGR measures the extent to which colleges and universities retain and graduate recruited athletes, thus providing one measure of whether they are fulfilling the NCAA's mission of maintaining athletes as an integral part of their student body. The strength of the FGR is its focus on student retention.

Another useful graduation rate measure, created by the NCAA to track athletes, is called the Graduation Success Rate (GSR). The GSR excludes from its calculation athletes—including transfers—who leave a particular school prior to graduating (i.e., early), while in good academic standing. The NCAA methodology also includes athletes who transfer into an institution in a program's GSR. The GSR recognizes college athletes may take a different path to graduation than other full-time students. However, a limitation of the GSR is that currently no comparable "graduation" rate exists for the general student body. In other words, the GSR and FGR measures are not comparable.

The NCAA created the GSR to address the FGR treating all college transfers as non-graduate dropouts. In effect, it treats all athletes meeting minimal eligibility requirements who leave

² See the 2023-2024 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report: [NCAA FBS Football](#).

college before graduation as transfers who graduate, ignoring that many transfers drop out and never graduate.

The AGG was developed to partly address FGR and GSR limitations. The AGG compares an adjusted FGR for full-time students and the reported FGR for college athletes. Reports for each sport are released at various times during the year.

CSRI believes in the full disclosure of all measures pertaining to college athlete graduation, including the FGR, GSR, and AGG since one measure is not “better” or somehow “fairer” than the others as each measure different things. The FGR focuses on an institution’s ability to retain and graduate students it admits, while the GSR attempts to account for athletes who leave a school that initially admitted them.

Historically, standard evaluations of NCAA athlete graduation rates have involved comparisons with general student body rates presumed to pertain to full-time students. However, many schools’ general student body rates include a significant number of part-time students. This is problematic because all NCAA athletes must be “full-time” and should therefore be compared with other full-time students. The downward “part-timer bias” in the student-body FGR distorts this comparison. Because part-time students take longer to graduate, this significantly reduces the measured general student-body FGR, making the relative rate of college athletes at many schools and conferences appear more favorable. CSRI’s Adjusted Graduation Gap methodology addresses this “part-timer bias” using regression-based adjustments for the percentage of part-time students enrolled at an institution.³ The adjustments also account for the aggregate influence of school-specific factors such as location and student demographics. These estimates then become the basis for the AGG comparison.

CSRI

The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) is housed within the Department of Sport & Entertainment Management at the University of South Carolina – Columbia. CSRI is dedicated

³ For details, see Eckard, E. W. (2010). NCAA athlete graduation rates: Less than meets the eye. *Journal of Sport Management*, 24(1), 45-59. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.24.1.45>

to conducting and supporting independent data collection and analysis related to college sport issues.

Along with conducting and disseminating in-house research on college athletes' graduation rates, post-athletic transition issues, and oscillating migration patterns, CSRI hosts the annual CSRI Conference on College Sport in Columbia, SC. This conference provides a forum for research of current college-sport issues and possible solutions to these challenges. CSRI also publishes a peer-reviewed scholarly journal entitled: *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics (JIIA)*, which provides an additional outlet for research related to college-sport issues.

This is the fourteenth-annual installment of CSRI's Division I basketball AGG Report. We hope this information encourages continuing research and discussion regarding both graduation rates and the quality and type of educational opportunities offered college athletes.

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Appendix

Table 1 – 2024 NCAA DI Major and Mid-Major (MM) Summary

Women: Major vs. Mid-Major

	Overall Mean	Black Mean	White Mean
All DI	-14.6	-16.3	-13.0
Major	-20.9	-22.8	-17.0
MM	-11.6	-13.2	-11.2
Major - MM =	-9.3	-9.6	-5.8

Women: Black vs. White

	All DI	Major Mean	MM Mean
Black AGG Mean	-16.3	-22.8	-13.2
White AGG Mean	-13.0	-17.0	-11.2
Black – White =	-3.3	-5.8	-2.0

Men: Major vs. Mid-Major

	Overall Mean	Black Mean	White Mean
All DI	-22.7	-24.7	-17.6
Major	-34.7	-36.6	-25.1
MM	-17.1	-19.1	-14.1
Major - MM =	-17.6	-17.5	-11.0

Men: Black vs. White

	All DI	Major Mean	MM Mean
Black AGG Mean	-24.7	-36.6	-19.1
White AGG Mean	-17.6	-25.1	-14.1
Black - White =	-7.1	-11.5	-5.0

Table 2 – 2024 NCAA Division I Conference Average AGGs

Women's Division I Conferences			
	Overall Mean	Black Mean	White Mean
MAJOR			
Pac-12 Conference	-4.5	-10.9	-0.5
Big East Conference	-15.6	-16.4	-20.3
Big Ten Conference	-20.2	-18.3	-22.0
American Athletic Conference	-20.4	-13.0	-38.6
Atlantic 10 Conference	-21.0	-28.8	-7.8
Southeastern Conference	-21.8	-27.2	-10.8
Mountain West Conference	-22.7	-25.5	-23.2
Big 12 Conference	-26.1	-25.2	-21.1
Conference USA	-26.6	-29.7	-0.4
Atlantic Coast Conference	-30.4	-32.7	-25.0
MAJOR AVERAGE	-20.9	-22.8	-17.0
MID-MAJOR			
Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference	5.4	7.5	0.0
Patriot League	0.6	3.0	4.1
Big South Conference	-0.8	-2.0	6.7
Southwestern Athletic Conference	-0.9	0.2	-58.3
Mid-American Conference	-2.4	9.1	-5.6
Missouri Valley Conference	-4.5	-18.2	0.2
Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference	-8.0	-12.9	-0.4
Big West Conference	-9.6	-13.9	-14.7
Colonial Athletic Association	-11.6	-9.9	-16.6
Horizon League	-12.1	-22.2	-14.9
ASUN Conference	-12.3	-14.6	-2.0
Southland Conference	-13.0	-15.5	9.0
Big Sky Conference	-14.5	-45.7	-7.7
America East Conference	-17.3	-17.2	-11.6
Western Athletic Conference	-17.9	-19.0	-11.7
Southern Conference	-18.1	-11.8	-11.3
Ohio Valley Conference	-19.4	-24.2	-22.6
Sun Belt Conference	-19.8	-12.8	-22.1
Northeast Conference	-20.5	-20.2	-19.8
West Coast Conference	-21.0	-8.5	-10.8
Summit League	-26.1	-27.9	-24.1
MID-MAJOR AVERAGE	-11.6	-13.2	-11.2
DIVISION I AVERAGE	-14.6	-16.3	-13.0

Men's Division I Conferences

	Overall Mean	Black Mean	White AGG
MAJOR			
Atlantic 10 Conference	-29.4	-27.2	-36.7
Big East Conference	-29.5	-30.4	-24.0
Conference USA	-31.4	-30.8	-13.8
Big Ten Conference	-31.9	-39.2	-24.1
Mountain West Conference	-32.6	-43.6	-20.4
Big 12 Conference	-33.6	-27.3	-28.3
Pac-12 Conference	-34.6	-38.7	-13.9
Southeastern Conference	-38.5	-38.5	-13.2
Atlantic Coast Conference	-41.9	-44.8	-32.2
American Athletic Conference	-43.1	-45.7	-44.7
MAJOR AVERAGE	-34.7	-36.6	-25.1
MID-MAJOR			
Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference	1.8	-5.5	0.0
Southwestern Athletic Conference	-6.4	-6.4	5.3
Colonial Athletic Association	-8.3	-7.6	-3.2
Missouri Valley Conference	-9.5	-8.8	9.8
Big South Conference	-10.5	-9.9	-13.0
Sun Belt Conference	-13.8	-23.5	-6.8
Big Sky Conference	-14.7	-16.8	-19.7
ASUN Conference	-16.2	-29.4	-14.4
Mid-American Conference	-16.7	-24.5	12.7
Patriot League	-17.4	-17.1	-14.1
Southland Conference	-17.8	-17.8	-23.4
Southern Conference	-18.0	-15.8	-17.8
Western Athletic Conference	-19.3	-17.9	-20.4
America East Conference	-20.8	-28.5	-11.1
Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference	-21.5	-21.5	-9.5
Ohio Valley Conference	-22.5	-16.6	-48.6
Big West Conference	-23.1	-15.7	-32.7
Northeast Conference	-23.2	-25.7	-25.9
West Coast Conference	-23.9	-23.8	-26.6
Horizon League	-25.8	-34.5	-2.1
Summit League	-30.8	-33.0	-34.1
MID-MAJOR AVERAGE	-17.1	-19.1	-14.1
DIVISION I AVERAGE	-22.7	-24.7	-17.6

Chart 1 – AGG Trends: DI Women’s Basketball

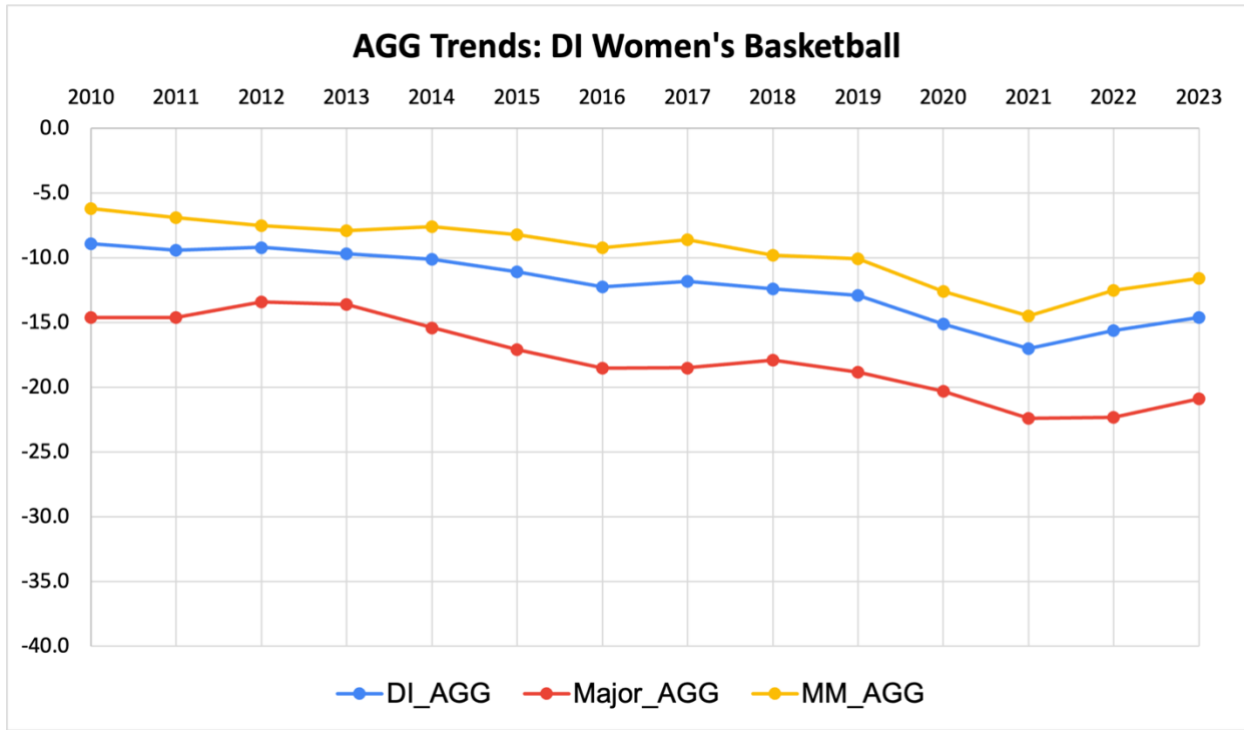


Chart 2 – AGG Trends: DI Men’s Basketball

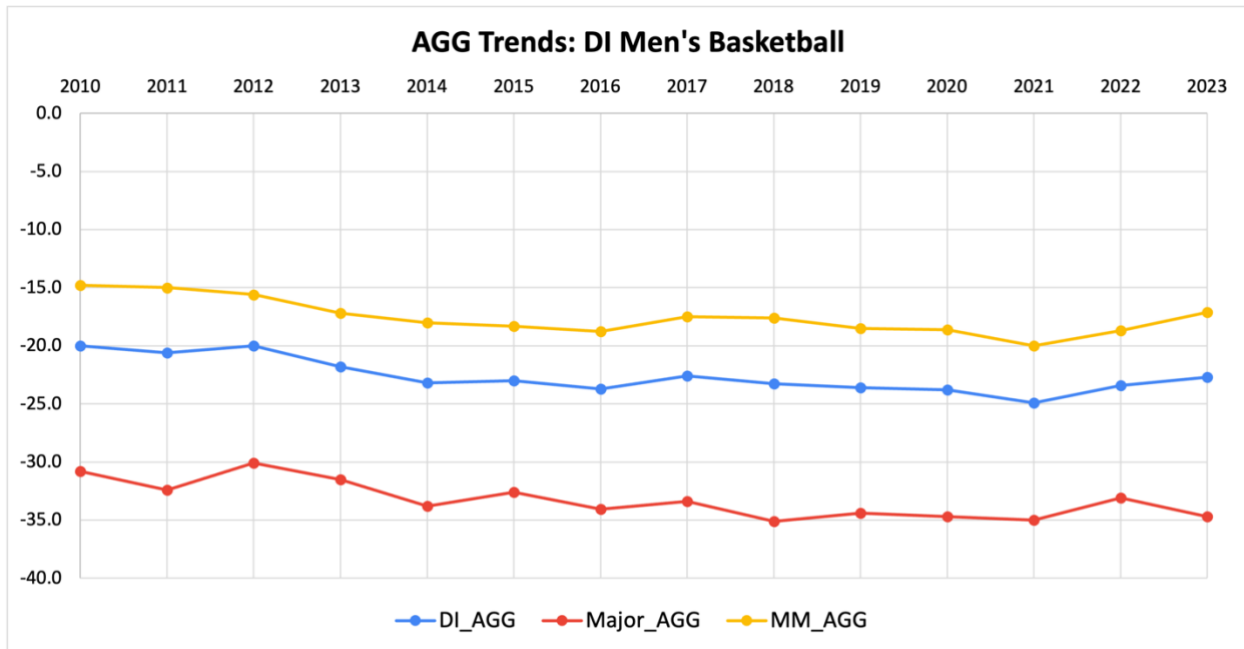


Chart 3 – AGG Trends: Women’s Basketball Major Black AGG vs. White AGG

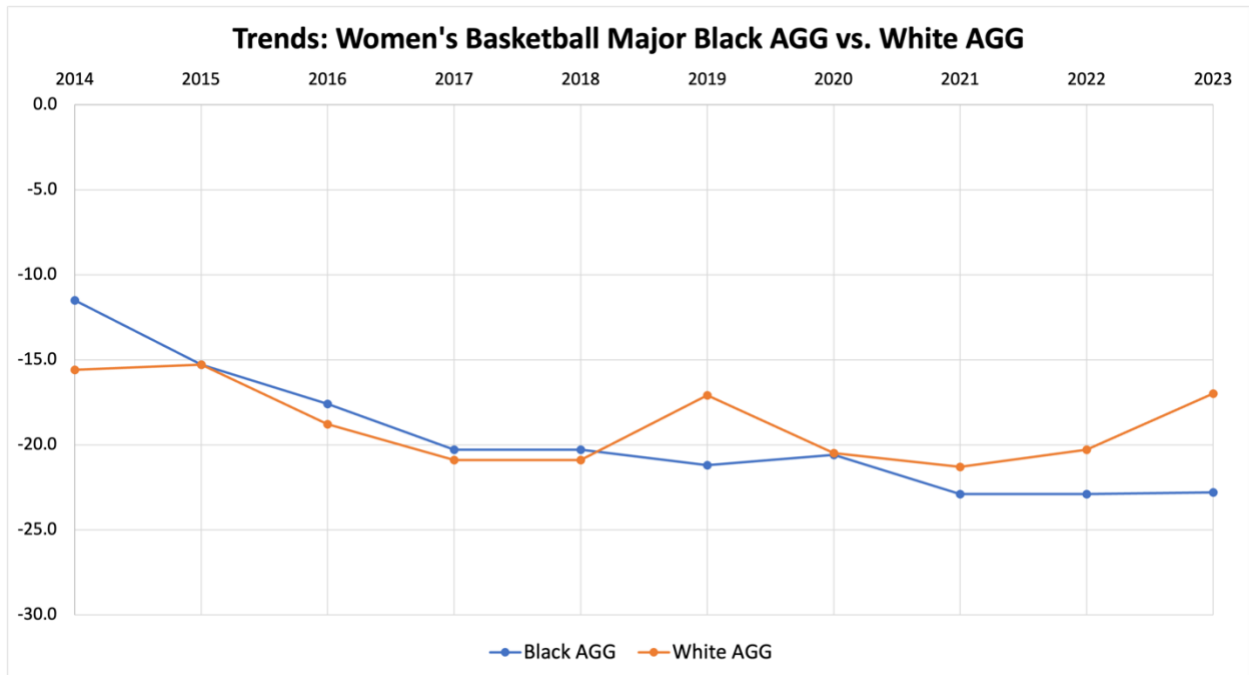


Chart 4 – AGG Trends: Women’s Basketball Mid-Major Black AGG vs. White AGG

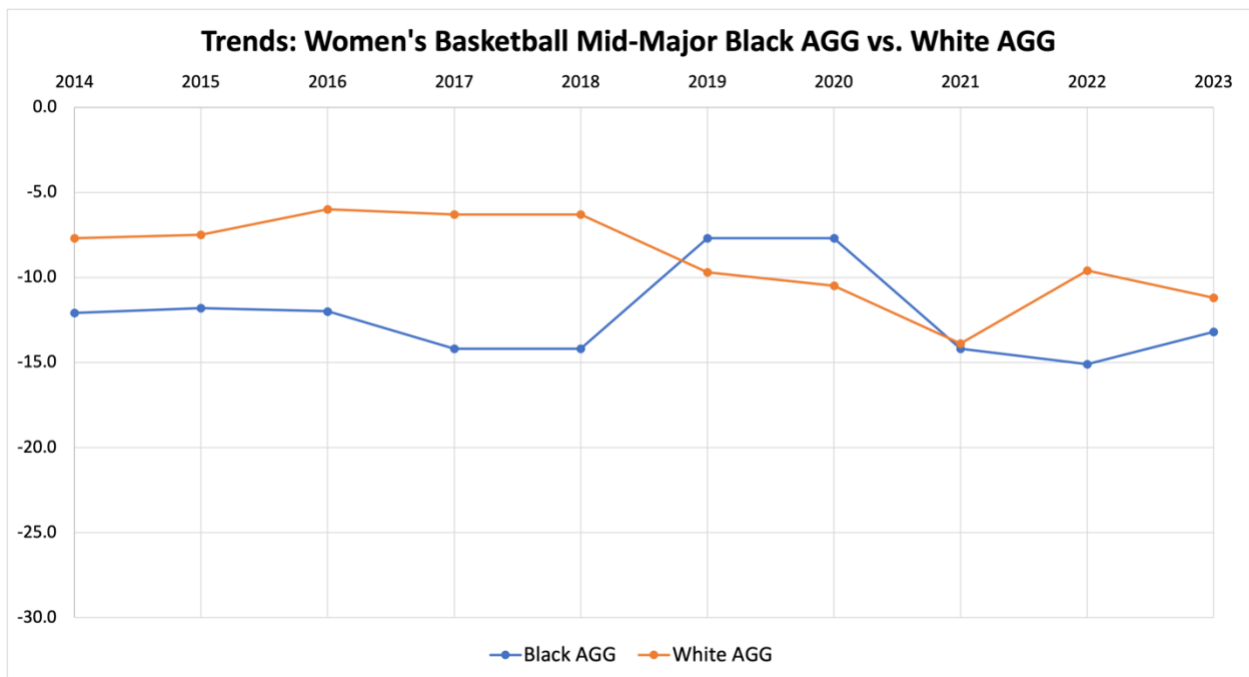


Chart 5 – AGG Trends: Men’s Basketball Major Black AGG vs. White AGG

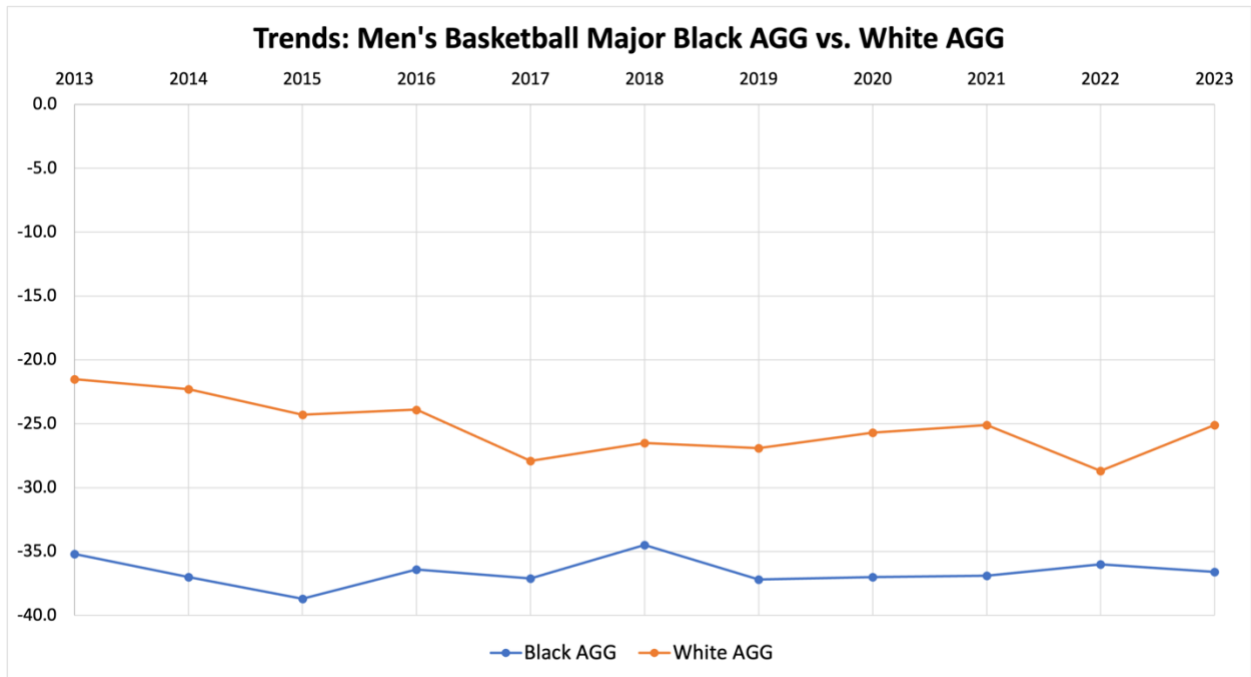


Chart 6 – AGG Trends: Men’s Basketball Mid-Major Black AGG vs. White AGG

