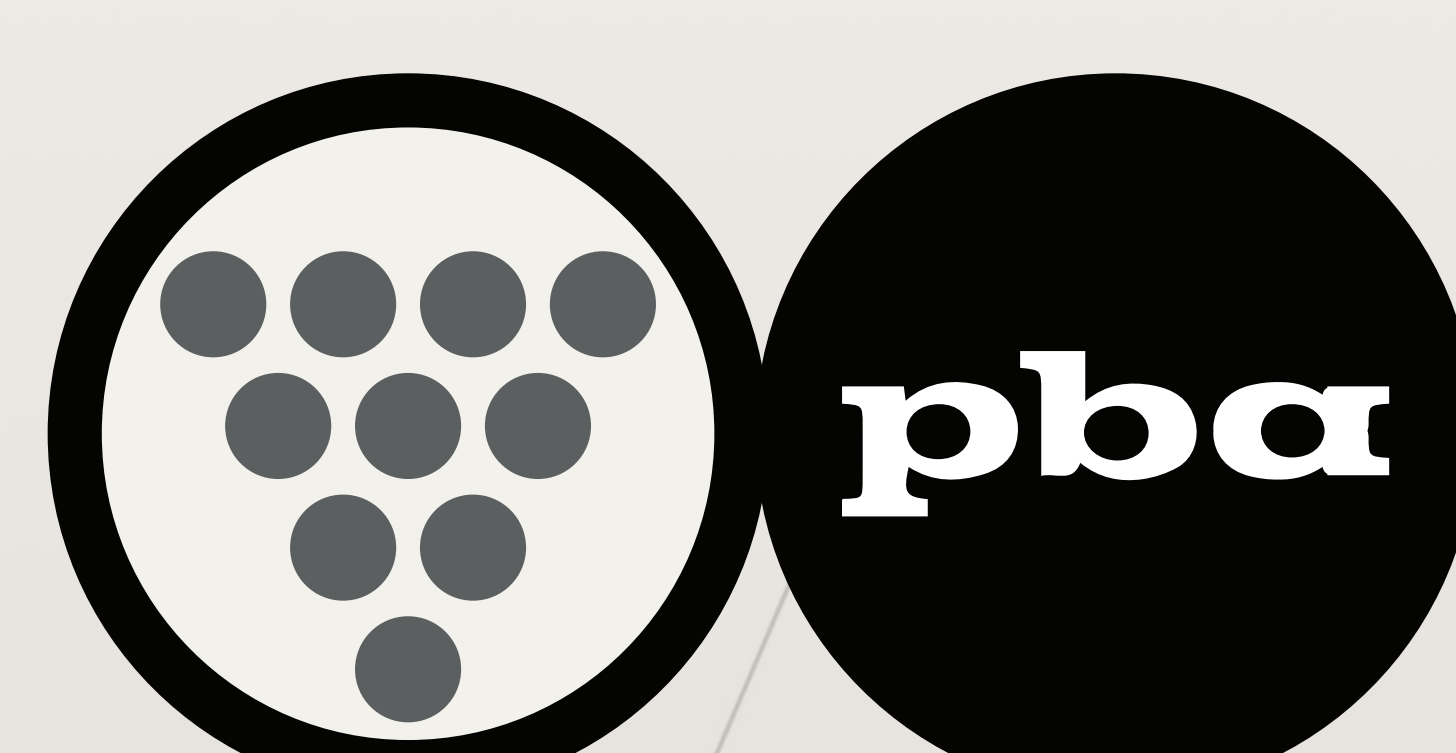




# 1969

Akron, Ohio attorney, sports agent and television personality Eddie Elias met with 33 founding members at the American Bowling Congress Tournament in Syracuse, N.Y., where those 33 contributed \$50 each to help create the Professional Bowlers Association.



“Wrong Foot” Lou Campi of Dumont, N.J., won the PBA’s first event, the Empire State Open in Albany, N.Y., and collected a \$2,500 first prize.



# The PBA made its national TV debut on ABC Television with the National PBA Tournament at Paramus, N.J., with Jim McKay and Fred Wolf handling the broadcast. Roy Lown won his first and only title by defeating Rich Robinette, 196-191, and he became the first left-hander to win a PBA Tour title.



The first PBA Tournament of Champions was contested at Play Bowl in Indianapolis. Joe Joseph won, earning \$15,000. Billy Golembiewski finished second. Future PBA Hall of Famers Carmen Salvino, Don Carter, Dick Weber, Harry Smith, Dave Soutar and Glenn Allison all finished in the Top 15.

Don Carter won four titles, earned \$49,972 in prize money and recorded an incredible 18 top-five finishes.



ABC Sports began its “Pro Bowlers Tour” series coverage with the Empire State Open. Hall of Fame broadcaster Chris Schenkel, who was in the booth for the first broadcast with color analyst Billy Welu, would become broadcaster in the hi



Firestone began its sponsorship of the PBA Tournament of Champions, a partnership that started at Firestone Bowlarama Lanes in Akron, Ohio before moving to Riviera Lanes in 1966. The partnership lasted 29 consecutive years concluding with the 1993 event in Fairlawn (Akron), Ohio. The Firestone Tournament of Champions was the first commercially-titled sports event ever on national network television.

Jack Biondolillo bowled the first nationally televised perfect game in PBA history during the finals of the Firestone Tournament of Champions, defeating Les Schissler, 300-216, and earning a \$10,000 perfect game bonus.



Based in Fairlawn (Akron), Ohio, Riviera Lanes hosted its first Firestone Tour. The center won the Tour in 1966-1994.



Billy Hardwick became the first player to complete what would later be known as the “PBA Triple Crown,” winning the BPAA All-Star (later re-named as the U.S. Open) after winning the 1963 PBA National Championship and the 1965 Tournament of Champions.



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The PBA Regional Tour was launched with its inaugural event... the Regional Players Invitational. Tom Hennessey won.