Professional Bowlers Association of America (PBA)
The PBA was founded in 1958 by Eddie Elias, an attorney from Akron, OH. There were 33 charter members. The first PBA tour, in 1959, included only three tournaments with a total of $49,500 in prize money. But Elias kept lining up sponsors, and the tour grew to 7 tournaments in 1960, 11 in 1961, 32 in 1962, and 38 in 1963, when prize money reached $1 million. Although the number of tournaments dropped to 31 the following year, prize money increased to about $1.2 million. The first big-money event, the $100,000 Firestone Tournament of Champions, was added to the tour in 1965.

In 1969, the PBA inaugurated its National Resident Professional Championship at Cincinnati, for bowling pros who work as instructors at lanes, and in 1970 it set up a regional tournament program as a stepping-stone to the pro tour for younger professional bowlers. Major additions to the tour in 1971 were the Brunswick World Open, with 20 top foreign bowlers competing against the best American professionals, and the BPAA-PBA Open, which had previously been the BPAA All-Star Tournament, not affiliated with the professional tour.

Earl Anthony in 1975 became the first bowler ever to earn more than $100,000 in a year—more than twice the total prize money available just 17 years earlier. Like other professional sports, bowling profited greatly from television. ABC was the major network for the PBA, beginning with the finals of the National PBA Invitational in 1961. Thirty-three of the 34 national championships were televised in 1979, covering the entire tour, ESPN five of the six full tour events, and NBC the PBA Doubles Classic.

The television audience for bowling was both aging and declining, however, as at a time when networks were trying to appeal to younger viewers. After 36 years, ABC dropped its coverage of PBA events in 1997. The PBA then entered into a two-year agreement with CBS for selected tour events, but ratings fell below the association's guarantee. At the end of 1999, the PBA was on the verge of bankruptcy, more than $1 million in debt. In March 2000, Chris Peters, a former vice president of Microsoft, led a group of investors who bought the PBA and turned it from a nonprofit organization to a limited liability corporation. The reported price was $7 million, which in ABC coverage cost $1.4 million in debt, and Peters said the investors were willing to spend up to $25 million to promote professional bowling. He also suggested that the PBA might combine its summer and winter into a single tour season, to run from September through March, but no final decision has been made on that move.

Address: 12870 Route 30, North Huntington, PA 15642
Website: www.pba.com

Professional Football Researchers Association (PFRA)
The PFRA was established during a meeting June 21–23, 1979, in Canton, OH, the home of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, by about two dozen researchers concerned by the amount of misinformation being disseminated on the early history of the sport. Membership is now about 220. The association issues a bimonthly newsletter, Coffin Corner, and has also published several monographs and booklets. (A "coffin corner" is an area of the sideline, near the opponent's goal line, where a punter attempts to kick the ball out of bounds to put the opponent in dangerous territory.)

Address: PO Box 10861, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410-9601 (561) 624-8400
Website: www.pfba.com

Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA)
The PRCA has its roots in an informal organization of rodeo cowboys who got together in 1936 to work for better purses and better jobs. They called themselves the Cowboys' Turtle Association because progress was so slow. In 1945, the group became the Rodeo Cowboys Association. Undoubtedly the biggest step toward its present prosperity was the establishment of the National Finals Rodeo in 1959.

Despite the name, which it took in 1975, the PRCA now includes members from all facets of the sport, including rodeo organizing committees and stock contractors. The association sanctions more than 600 rodeos a year and has 6,000 contestant members and another 3,000 permit-card holders who compete in smaller rodeos. A permit-card holder must earn at least $250 before being eligible for a permit.

Since 1976, the PRCA has operated Procom, a computerized system that allows cowboys to enter sanctioned rodeos by making a phone call to the association's headquarters in Colorado Springs, CO. The association also operates a computerized news service for the media, assigns professional officials to rodeos, and publishes a weekly newspaper, Pro Rodeo Sports News. The PRCA shares a $2.5 million building with the Pro Football Hall of Champions and Museum of the American Cowboy.

Address: 101 Pororo Drive, Colorado Springs, CO (719) 593-8840
Website: www.prorodeo.com

Professional Women's Bowling Association (PWBA)
Two rival organizations, the Professional Women Bowlers Association and the Ladies Professional Bowlers Association, merged into the Women's Professional Bowlers Association in 1978. The PWBA became the Ladies Professional Bowlers Tour in 1981 and took its present name in 1999. The PWBA sanctions more than 25 major national tournaments, and the tour attracts some 50,000 spectators a week.

Address: 2717 Cherryvale Boulevard, Rochford, IL 61112 (815) 622-5756
Website: www.pwba.com

Pro Football Hall of Fame
Canton, OH

Because the National Football League was formally organized in a meeting at Canton, OH in 1920, the city was chosen as the site for the Pro Football Hall of Fame in