



“NBA”—not the National Basketball Association!!!

“Do you belong to the NBA?”

Sound familiar? It’s a question asked at the beginning of every bowling season of many tenpin keglers. Of course, not everyone is asked, although there is really no reason why they aren’t.

First, let me say that the NBA referenced here is not the National Basketball Association but *The National Bowling Association*.

The NBA was organized in August of 1939 for the expressed purpose of encouraging Negroes (Afro-Americans/blacks) to develop their skills in the game of tenpins. It was called the *National Negro Bowling Association* at the time of its inception because blacks and other non-Caucasians were denied membership in the American Bowling Congress or the Women’s International Bowling Congress due to restrictive clauses in their constitutions.

Renamed “The National Bowling Association, Inc.” in 1944, the NBA active-

ly participated in the “fight for equality” in bowling, as both ABC and WIBC removed the “non-Caucasian” clause from their constitutions in 1950. Since that time, NBA members have had the privilege of competing in all open sanctioned tournaments.

The NBA today is in its 53rd year of existence and has over 23,000 members in 34 states, from New York to California, plus Bermuda. With approximately 80 percent of its present membership being black, it is important to note that, *contrary to general belief, the NBA has no racial restrictions whatsoever.*

Through organized competition on national, regional, and local levels, the NBA continues to accomplish its slogan: “Promoter of Sportsmanship, Fellowship, and Friendship.”

Membership in the NBA entitles you to individual league achievement awards, participation in TNBA tournaments throughout the USA and Bermuda, and

NBA highlights

- 1939 — Founded as National Negro Bowling Association; first Annual Tournament held in Cleveland, Ohio.
- 1941 — Incorporated under state laws of Ohio.
- 1944 — Name changed to the National Bowling Association, Inc.
- 1945 — Joe Blue Award for Outstanding Achievement donated by the Cleveland Postal Alliance in memory of the deceased “organizer.”
- 1950 — Racial restrictions removed from constitutions of ABC and WIBC.
- 1978 — J. Elmer Reed of Cleveland, Ohio, becomes first black to be inducted into the American Bowling Congress Hall of Fame.

voting privileges in the local senate.

So the next time you hear the acronym “NBA” and you’re in a bowling center, just remember: NBA not only means the National Basketball Association but also *The National Bowling Association*.

(Note: In published works, the acronym “TNBA” is often used to designate the organization.)

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