

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910796585003321
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Titolo	They Will Have Their Game : Sporting Culture and the Making of the Early American Republic // Kenneth Cohen
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Ithaca, NY : , : Cornell University Press, , [2017] ©2017
ISBN	1-5017-5200-6 1-5017-1421-X
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource
Disciplina	306.4830973
Soggetti	Popular culture - United States - History - 19th century Popular culture - United States - History - 18th century Sports - Social aspects - United States - History - 19th century Sports - Social aspects - United States - History - 18th century Electronic books. United States Civilization 1783-1865
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Previously issued in print: 2017.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- Part One. The Colonial Period -- 1. The Rise of Genteel Sport -- 2. A Revolution in Sporting Culture -- Part Two. The Early National Period -- 3. Sport Reborn -- 4. Prestige or Profit -- Part Three. The Antebellum Period -- 5. A Mass Sporting Industry -- 6. Sporting Cultures -- Epilogue -- Notes -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	In They Will Have Their Game, Kenneth Cohen explores how sports, drinking, gambling, and theater produced a sense of democracy while also reinforcing racial, gender, and class divisions in early America. Pairing previously unexplored financial records with a wide range of published reports, unpublished correspondence, and material and visual evidence, Cohen demonstrates how investors, participants, and professional managers and performers from all sorts of backgrounds saw these "sporting" activities as stages for securing economic and political advantage over others. They Will Have Their Game tracks the evolution of this fight for power from 1760 to 1860, showing how its

roots in masculine competition and risk-taking gradually developed gendered and racial limits and then spread from leisure activities to the consideration of elections as "races" and business as a "game." Compelling narratives about individual participants illustrate the processes by which challenge and conflict across class, race, and gender lines produced a sporting culture that continued to grant unique freedoms to a wide range of society even as it also provided a basis for the normalization of systematic inequality. The result reorients the standard narrative about the rise of commercial popular culture to question the influence of ideas such as "gentility" and "respectability," and to put men like P. T. Barnum at the end instead of the beginning of the process, unveiling a new take on the creation of the white male republic of the early nineteenth century in which sporting activities lie at the center and not the margins of economic and political history.
