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Know the Odds Are Ever in Skier Julia Mancuso's Favor

► Pro tip: Don't ask Julia Mancuso how she won. "It is not a shock to me when I have a good race," the 29-year-old alpine skier says. "I started to tell people I'd just worn my lucky underwear." And then, in 2010, she actually designed an underwear line, Kiss My Tiara, so there's truth to the snark. Lucky underwear alone, though, can't account for Mancuso's Olympic gold medal (in the giant slalom at Turin in 2006) or her two silvers (in Vancouver in 2010). Or, for that matter, the strong odds that she'll medal again this year in Sochi.

And, sure: That competitiveness with Lindsey Vonn (Tiger's lady friend!), who beat her to the gold by half a second last time, might make her push a little harder this time. But Mancuso's an equal-opportunity rival. "I'm racing against all sixty people out there," she says. For the record, we know who we're betting on this time around.

—MARK BYRNE

MARC HOM



No. 11 Meet a Bunch of Folks Who Are Cashing In on Global Warming

► In *Windfall*, McKenzie Funk introduces us to people betting money on our dear planet's decimation. Spoiler: They're rich.—M.B.



1. An ex-banker in New York City seeks up more than a million acres in South Sudan for next to nothing, anticipating that the global food shortage would make the area along the White Nile more valuable farmland.

2. A company in Australia seeks to become the "Nasdaq for water"—brokering the water in a river system because by 2030 climate change is expected to decrease rainfall there by 3 percent.

3. In Southern California, fire-prevention specialists are contracted by private insurance companies like AIG to give extra focus to warding off fires near the million-dollar-plus homes they insure.

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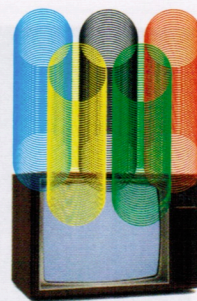


Start Watching the Olympics the Right Way (Because, Yes, You're Doing It Wrong)

1. **Get all your Olympic cynicism out of the way first.** Sure, the Winter Olympics are a hopelessly corrupt enterprise that allows near-totalitarian states to drape themselves in the noxious glow of faux humanitarianism, and yes, they showcase too many X Games-y sports that are really just elaborate hobbies for rich, bored white kids. But they *do* give us something to talk about in the dead of February when there ain't shit else on. So drop your whole "The Olympics are *soooo* lame" face and get in the spirit, asshole!

2. **Judge countries strictly by their outfits at the opening ceremonies.** Listen as Matt Lauer explains how the government of Scotland commissioned Michael Kors to design the athletes' tam-o'-shanters: "The Pictish stone you see adorning the crest is actually an ancient Scottish clan symbol!" Get angry that the United States has to wait three hours before they can march into the stadium. Why do we always have to go in alphabetical order? This isn't graduation day at Skidmore. Mix it up.

3. **Decide which sports to skip.** You can watch two luge runs and get the idea. They're on a sled and they go fast. GOT IT. There are only two sports you need to follow from beginning to end: figure skating and ice hockey.



4. **Gasps when a figure skater falls.** You can even put your hand over your mouth in horror, as I do. Treat every fall as if you just witnessed someone being executed via firing squad.

5. **Vicariously warm yourself beside the NBC-studio fireplace.** They always have one behind the talking Bob Costas doll for the Winter Olympics, and it always looks so cozy and inviting!

6. **Embrace tape delay.** Trust me, America: With the exception of hockey, it's far better for NBC to snip out all the preliminary heats and Zamboni runs than for you to watch these games unfold in real, agonizing time.

7. **Watch the Nancy Kerrigan retrospective!** Will she cry? Please. I bet NBC paid her a million bucks to cry.

8. **Drink every time you see Vladimir Putin shirtless and/or having a journalist killed.** Vodka only, please. You're in Russia now. Other spirits are for the weak and easily conquered. —DREW MAGARY