Know the Odds Are Even in Skier Julia Mancuso’s Favor

Pro tip: Don’t ask Julia Mancuso how she won. “It was 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.” Then, in 2010, she actually designed an underwear line, Kiss My Tiara, so there’s a 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 the people out there,” she says. For the record, we know who were betting on this time around.

— Mark Byrne

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 bought 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.

4. Gasp when a figure skater fails. 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