

Mancuso laid back and focused on Sochi Games

By Grayson Schaffer, Outside

My plan to treat Julia Mancuso like an Olympic superstar is falling apart. I rented a red Porsche Cayman at LAX and made brunch reservations at the Ivy. But it's already 10am, I have to get her to a photo shoot at noon, and she hasn't showered after her morning beach workout of sprints, tuck jumps, and stutter steps. Fortunately, Mancuso's throwing audibles and solving problems. She knows this great little organic non-GMO spot on Abbot Kinney. "I showered last night," she says, both simplifying things and confirming the basic nature of her appeal.

Mancuso is the Olympic champion you'd want to drink a beer with. The 29-year-old Lake Tahoe native trains for skiing by surfing and paddleboarding, appears untroubled by minutiae, and then, like Big Papi, comes through when it matters. This pattern first emerged at the 2006 Turin Games when, as an obscure 21-year-old, Mancuso won gold in the giant slalom. She wasn't quite a favorite at Vancouver, either, but she won two silver medals, making her the most decorated Olympian in U.S. Women's Ski Team history.

Going into the Sochi Games, most of the chatter has focused on Mikaela Shiffrin, the 18-year-old American phenom, and Mancuso's training partner Lindsey Vonn, who reinjured her surgically repaired right knee in November. Maybe it's because of Mancuso's relaxed demeanor that observers continue to underestimate her. But to hear Mancuso tell it, the *laissez-faire* attitude isn't a strategy; it's all she knows.

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