

## A New Olympic Boyfriend

Written by Karen Crackpot

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Every Olympics I pick a new boyfriend. It keeps me excited and involved in the games.

For the winter Olympics of 2002, my boyfriend was Apolo Anton Ohno. Yes, he may seem like an obvious choice now, but at the time, he was an out of nowhere short-track speed skater. I'd never even heard of short-track before I fell in love with this kid from Seattle.

Raised by a single father, his speed skating career began because he needed to do something that would keep him out of trouble. Bad boy makes good – it really doesn't get much better than that for me. Pair that with those eyes, that kissable mole on his neck, and that bandana, and I was a goner. But what really sent me over the edge wasn't just that he won medals, but that he was so gracious about it. Gracious with his competitors, his teammates, and the media. Articulate bad boy with manners. Yummy.

The Olympics is about sportsmanship, in both winning and defeat. It's about training and doing your best. It's about being part of a team – whether it's the ski team or the hockey team, or just Team USA. Apolo understood that. He was a crush worth having.

I thought about cheating on my boy during the 2006 winter Olympics - I bought into the Bode Miller show. Come on, the guy is sexy as all hell; another bad boy, and I'm a sucker for the bad boy types. How could anyone avoid Bode Miller? He was everywhere. I loved that he was good with the media, and I thought the 60 Minutes brou ha ha was bullshit (he never actually said that he skied wasted).

But then I started to worry. He was courting the press, wasn't he? And...isn't he supposed to be against all that? But ok, I was willing to give him a chance because he was so damn sexy, and he was a little closer to my age than Apolo, who let's face it, is still kind of a boy.

Then the Olympics actually began and Bode started to disappoint. It's not that he finished 5th or 6th or that bothered me. And it's not that he straddled a gate in Super G or whatever that was. In those races he at least got to the bottom. It was the two races after those that I began to

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wonder, “why is Bode even here?” Clearly he’d rather be somewhere else. That’s why his runs were so sub-par - he simply didn’t want to be there. But that’s what’s so disappointing. He couldn’t have pulled it together and focused for two weeks to make other people happy? Even as I type that, I know it sounds absurd. Bode Miller do something to make someone else happy? Does he care about making the US Ski Team, his sponsors, the entire United States, happy? No.

Although I would file it under “courting the media” or “overexposure,” I actually believe in the stuff he says in those Join Bode Nike ads. All that talk about encouraging kids to play sports just for the love it, and not just to teach them that winning is important blah blah blah... I can totally get behind that. But somewhere along the way, Bode Miller stopped loving his sport.

That’s when I began to rethink this. I can’t live with someone with that kind of attitude. Bode, if you’re unhappy, go see a shrink. But don’t come screaming into these games in your RV, with your commercials and magazine covers, billboards, blog, radio show, autobiography, documentary, and bad boy attitude, and then....pffffffft. You didn’t even try! You made a mockery of your sport, the fans, and the Olympics. I’m so disappointed in you, because I thought you were better than that. I thought you had the maturity to rise above your own demons and take one for your team/sponsors/country/fans. Otherwise, you should have stayed home.

On Saturday night, I stayed home to watch my boyfriends in their events. Potential new boyfriend Bode lost anylove I could have for him in 26 seconds. That’s how long it took for him to slip and slide down maybe a third of the mountain and then miss a gate. And then to tell reporters later that your Olympics experience was awesome because you “got to party and socialize at an Olympic level”? Yes, I’m sure you meant that you got to meet other athletes and the Olympic atmosphere is fun. But come on, you had to have known how that quote was going to be used.

But in the short-track rink, here is scrappy Apolo, my boyfriend of yesteryear. He had a bit of a glitch at the beginning of the Olympics because he was nervous. But he talked to his dad and his friends, and he got his head on straight and remembered why he was in Torino. He’s been skating admirably ever since, plus he shakes hands and shows good sportsmanship with the Koreans, who want to kill him. Saturday night, he skated the perfect race and won gold; when I saw that grin on his face I fell in love again. But it wasn’t even over yet! Thanks to him and his powerful skating, he got the US a bronze in the relay also. This is a guy to emulate. This is an Olympian.

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I'm ashamed of myself that I bought into the Bode hype. Bode isn't boyfriend material yet – he still has some growing up to do. It pains me to say that, believe me. But he let himself down too, and that's probably the most unattractive part. Apolo, despite being a mere 23-years-old, is a man. I had it right the first time.