

## It's all downhill with olympic-style driver behaviour

While Olympic competitors risk life and limb for gold and a place in history, many British drivers will take the same risks for a few seconds' advantage on the road, says The AA Motoring Trust.

During the fortnight of the Turin Winter Olympics, the competitive streak of some British motorists will help to kill around 120 people on UK roads.

The AA Trusts behavioural scientist Jo Hill identifies the winter Olympic equivalents of five types of motorist who will land themselves, and others, with a place in hospital or the mortuary:

**Ski jumpers:** hurtle down the outside lane before it narrows to see how many cars they can beat before forcing their way inside;

**Speed skaters:** tail each other as fast and as close as possible on motorways and dual carriageways - one slip-up leads to calamity;

**Slalom skiers:** weave in and out of traffic, barely missing other vehicles, just to gain a few car lengths;

**Ice hockey players:** charge aggressively at other cars to try to force the drivers to give way - until they meet other players;

**Bobsleighers:** are usually young drivers who cram as many people as possible into a small car, tear down winding roads at break-neck speed and expect to steer normally, until they misjudge a corner and spill everyone all over the road.

"Competitiveness and aggression may be traits shared by Olympic competitors and go-for-it drivers, but there are no medals to be won by nipping three cars in front, says Jo Hill.

"These drivers show a dangerous over-confidence and a sense of indestructibility created by being insulated in a metal box, often protected by airbags, ABS, pre-tensioners and other safety features. Winter Olympic sportsmen and women, many of whom travel as fast as a car, have no such protection but understand the risks and how far they can push their luck and abilities.

"Perhaps the worst judges of speed, skill and risk are what we might call the bob-slayers - young drivers of small, ageing cars who pack in three, four and sometimes more of their friends, and litter Britains roads with multi-casualty crashes."