

Graphic detail

Daily chart

The secret to Winter Olympic success: cold or hard cash

Money helps countries with warmer climates excel

Feb 4th 2022

Going for cold
Olympic medals

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Since Australia increased funding for its Olympic Committee by over 60% a year in the mid-1990s, nearly all its future gold medalists have set up training headquarters in Canada or Europe. The American Olympic Committee helps cover costs for coaching, training, health care and housing. Cash prizes for medallists may also make a difference. Italy pays \$214,000 to athletes who bring home gold; Spain gives them \$112,000. Other countries are more creative. In 2016 Germany gave Olympic medallists a lifetime supply of free beer. South Korean winners are exempt from national military service. All four countries have punched above their weight at past Winter Olympics.