

Russia's 2014 Olympics Hopefuls Off Limits

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Access to Russian athletes participating in the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics will be limited during the preparation period, Deputy Sports Minister Yury Nagornykh said.

The deputy minister told reporters on Friday that the athletes should be protected from the unauthorized arrival of various “experts” who want to tinker with their preparations, saying that the work of “scientific groups” had been regulated.

“There are many people wanting to help. But we do not have time for experiments. We need to keep on track with our plans,” he added. Journalists will not be forbidden from interviewing the athletes and will be given scheduled dates when they can meet with the teams, both in Russia and abroad, Interfax reported.

“Don’t misunderstand us, we are shutting ourselves out. Team preparation, especially before the Olympics, is not walk on the beach,” he said, Sport-Express reported.

The deputy minister also mentioned that athletes have the right to use their popularity for marketing purposes, as long as the projects do not interfere with training.

The 2014 Winter Olympics, held from Feb. 7 to 23 in Sochi, is one of President Vladimir Putin's pet projects. Costs for the games have overrun, with initial budget estimates rising by 500 percent.

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