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By: Jordan Graham

## OLYMPIAN PROTECTION

### Boston company Global Rescue guarding U.S. skiers at Sochi



**TO SAVE AND PROTECT:** Global Rescue not only does mountain rescue work but also will provide security for U.S. Olympic skiers such as Patrick Deneen, above, at next month's 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

The U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association is relying on a Boston company to get its team members out of a tight spot in the event of a terrorist attack or other crisis at next month's Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

"When something does happen, it's our personnel who are going to respond," said Dan Richards, CEO of Global Rescue. "We're helping them prepare for not only medical but security (services)."

A company that describes itself as "AAA for your body," Global Rescue has been providing medical services for USSA for eight years, but will be bulking up to deal with any potential security concerns during the Sochi games.

They will have "up to a half dozen aircraft" to assist with medical and security-related evacuations, the company said.

"A disruption will involve hundreds of thousands of people wanting to go from one place to another," Richards said of a terrorist attack. "We have created plans that would create a mechanism for doing that."



**SAFE BET:** Global Rescue CEO Dan Richards, above, says his Boston company will provide security and medical services for the U.S. Olympic ski and snowboarding team.

Photo by John Wilcox

Global Rescue's security team, made up of Special Forces veterans, has been involved in the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, and 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada, as well as other major crises, including the Arab Spring and the Fukushima earthquake, but Sochi is unique, Richards said.

"You've got this challenging environment and you've got this geo-political environment," Richards said.

Global Rescue's plans include taking into account the mountains that surround Sochi, and the Black Sea to the west of the city, he said.

"Global Rescue is a great company and we've had a long and productive relationship," USSA spokesman Tom Kelly said in an email. He declined to answer questions regarding security or "any details of our relationship."

U.S. Olympic team officials did not return calls for comment. Concerns over the safety of the Games have increased in recent weeks, due to an ongoing conflict between Islamic insurgents and Russian security forces in the North Caucasus region, roughly 340 miles from Sochi. A rebel leader has called on his followers to attack the Winter Olympics.

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Mark Galeotti, an NYU professor and Russian security expert, said the chances of an attack are higher because of the political dynamic in Russia.

"The games have become such a pet project of (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's. Frankly, the insurgents would suffer a major blow to their morale and credibility if they didn't try to hit the games, whether directly or indirectly," Galeotti said.

Galeotti said he believes Russian authorities — who have committed as many as 63,000 police and military and \$2 billion to increase security — will deter a direct attack on the Olympics.

"The greatest risk is probably in other southern Russian cities," Galeotti said. "I doubt the Olympic teams ought to have any special concerns."