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German Olympian Dies in Karakoram Climbing Tragedy

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German Olympic gold medalist and former world champion biathlete Laura Dahlmeier has died following a mountaineering accident on Laila Peak in Pakistan’s Karakoram Range. She was 30 years old.

According to multiple reports, the accident occurred on July 28, 2025, at an altitude of approximately 5,700 meters. Dahlmeier was climbing alongside her partner, German mountaineer Marina Eva Krauss, when she was struck by falling rocks during their descent.

Krauss survived and was able to descend to base camp and alert local authorities. Dahlmeier's death was confirmed by German officials on July 30.

Due to the treacherous terrain and high risk of further rockfalls, rescue operations were attempted but later halted. Dahlmeier had previously expressed her wishes that no one risk their lives to retrieve her body if such a situation arose. This request was cited by her management team, international climbers involved in the rescue effort, and German officials as the basis for ending recovery efforts.

American climber Jackson Marvell, who participated in the recovery operation, stated in an interview that although retrieval was technically possible, it posed unacceptable risks to rescuers on the ground and by helicopter. German mountaineer Thomas Huber echoed this sentiment and confirmed that they chose to leave Dahlmeier where she fell in accordance with her written instructions.

Krauss, who spoke at a press conference following the tragedy, described the moment of the accident. She said that she witnessed Dahlmeier being struck by a large rock and thrown against a cliff face. Despite her attempts to call out and reach her, Krauss reported that there was no response and that it was too dangerous to continue climbing in the area.

Laura Dahlmeier was widely regarded as one of Germany's most accomplished winter sports athletes. She won two Olympic gold medals and one bronze at the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang. She also earned seven world championship titles between 2015 and 2019 before announcing her retirement from professional biathlon at the age of 25.

The German Olympic Sports Confederation and President Frank-Walter Steinmeier both expressed deep condolences, describing Dahlmeier as not only an exceptional athlete but also an inspiring and humble individual.

Her death has once again drawn attention to the risks associated with high-altitude mountaineering in the Karakoram, a region known for its stunning peaks and perilous climbing conditions. While her loss is deeply mourned, her legacy as both a world-class athlete and a courageous adventurer continues to inspire many.