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Belarussian Biathlete Domchareva Wins Third Sochi Gold

By The Moscow Times

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Darya Domracheva became Belarus' most successful Olympian of all time.

KRASNAYA POLYANA — Darya Domracheva became Belarus' most successful Olympian of all time with victory in the biathlon 12.5-kilometer mass start, her record third gold medal of the Sochi Winter Games.

Domracheva, who won the pursuit and individual races last week, relied on her searing pace to win in Monday's race — a missed shot on the last shooting stage blotting an otherwise flawless performance from the 27-year-old. She replaces double gold-winning rower Ekaterina Karsten as the most-decorated Belarusian Olympian of all time, and also becomes the first woman to win three biathlon golds at the same Games.

"It's amazing to be here because I dreamed about it, to be an Olympic champion, from my childhood," Domracheva said. "But to get three — dreams do come true."

Gabriela Soukalova of the Czech Republic, who might have taken gold had she shot clean on the last stage, was second, 20.2 seconds off the lead, with the bronze going to Norway's Tiril Eckhoff, seven seconds further back.

"I didn't believe it. I was very happy that I missed just one target. I didn't believe it before but, after that, I knew that it could be a successful day for me," said Soukalova.

Eckhoff snagged the bronze on the last skiing stage, breezing past German veteran Evi Sachenbacher-Stehle, who had been bidding to add a biathlon medal to her collection of five Olympic cross-country skiing medals.

There was more misery for Russia's Olga Zaitseva, a two-time gold medalist, as she fell on her way to a 24th-place finish.

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