

PLANET CANOE



2020 ICF ANNUAL MAGAZINE

TABLE OF CONTENTS



WELCOME

04



SPRINT

10



SLALOM

20



DEVELOPMENT

28



OCEAN RACING

38



SUP

46



PARACANOE

54



SUSTAINABILITY

64



SLALOM X

70



U23 SLALOM

76



U23 SPRINT

84



ANTI-DOPING

92



MARATHON

96



FREESTYLE

114



WILDWATER

122



TOKYO PREVIEWS

130



FROM THE PRESIDENT

WikiPaddle:
ICF Structure 101
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2019 WAS A FANTASTIC YEAR – 2020 WILL BE EVEN BETTER

SIGNS ARE GOOD FOR THE ONGOING GROWTH OF CANOEING

2019 was a record-breaking year for the International Canoe Federation, and one which has consolidated our position and reputation as a truly global Olympic sport.

The sporting world is a very crowded marketplace, with new sports applying pressure to more established sports, which in turn are coming up with exciting new initiatives to stay modern and also attract new fans.

Canoeing was very much at the cutting edge, and we can head into 2020 confident of our standing on the international sporting stage. But we cannot afford to take our eye off the main game.

Last year we once again took top level competition to new venues and new countries, and the response was fantastic. China is an exciting area for the growth of canoeing across the board, and in 2019 the country hosted our canoe sprint Super Cup, our Stand Up Paddling World Championships, our Canoe Marathon World Championships and a Dragon Boat World Cup.

There are always going to be challenges when you take major events to a new venue, but all our competitions in China were a great success, and we look forward to building on this relationship in the coming years.

Sort in Spain proved itself a wonderful location for our 2019 ICF Canoe Freestyle World Championships. The venue was fantastic, the support of the local community was inspiring, and the event itself was world-class.

What we learned in Sort is that if you put on a good show, people will come and watch – and often come back. The venue in Sort looked and sounded like a major sporting arena, it was in the centre of town, and the viewing areas were exceptional. It was a great blueprint for future events.

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SORT IN SPAIN PROVED ITSELF A WONDERFUL LOCATION FOR OUR 2019 ICF CANOE FREESTYLE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS. THE VENUE WAS FANTASTIC, THE SUPPORT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WAS INSPIRING, AND THE EVENT ITSELF WAS WORLD-CLASS.



“

NOWHERE IS THE GROWTH IN CANOEING MORE EVIDENT THAN IN PARACANOE. THANKS TO THE TREMENDOUS WORK OF THE ICF PARACANOE COMMITTEE, THE DISCIPLINE HAS GROWN AT AN INCREDIBLE RATE IN RECENT YEARS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

Regular venues on the ICF calendar also stepped up a level in 2019. Szeged in Hungary and La Seu in Spain hold major events most years, but last year they took on the responsibility of hosting world championships which also doubled as Olympic qualifying events, and did it in style.

The new developments at the Szeged course made it the perfect location for the ICF Canoe Sprint and Paracanoe World Championships, and the massive crowd was a wonderful showcase for our sport. Pictures from the event were beamed around the world, and truly showed us off at our very best.

La Seu is one of our oldest canoe slalom venues, having hosted the Olympic competition when we returned to the Games programme in Barcelona in 1992. As we saw in 2019, it still inspires the very best in the athletes and the fans and provided an event we can all feel very proud of. We once again combined the canoe slalom and the wildwater world championships, with the format continuing to prove successful. This approach opens up a new audience to both disciplines, and also allows for a sharing of resources. It also promotes greater media exposure, especially for wildwater, which is often in the shadow of its Olympic partner.

Our first stand up paddling world championships was, by any measure, a tremendous success. We saw a record number of participants, offered very attractive prizes money, ran development camps for athletes new to the sport, and introduced several initiatives to help promote SUP.

The viewing numbers and the feedback from the athletes speak for themselves. Our live streaming was a level above anything the sport had ever seen before, and drew praise from fans around the world, as well as the competitors.

An expert commentary team, innovative live steam graphics and a stunning location turned out to be the per-



fect cocktail for this showcase event, and we are already looking forward to hosting our next world championships. Several countries have expressed a desire to host SUP world titles in the coming years.

Extreme canoe slalom is one of our newest disciplines at the ICF, and it is also one of our fastest growing. From humble beginnings in 2016, the thrills and spills of this fast-flowing competition has caught the imagination of the fans and the athletes alike, and we believe may also have gained some attention from the Olympic movement.

To reach that next stage will require continued support from the national federations, the athletes and the coaches. Our 2019 world championships in Prague showed how dynamic the sport can be, and how well it comes across to a television audience. Sports like extreme canoe slalom have an important role to play as we continue to look at ways to modernise canoeing across the board.

Nowhere is the growth in canoeing more evident than in paracanoe. Thanks to the tremendous work of the ICF paracanoe committee, the discipline has grown at an incredible rate in recent years, and will continue to do so in the years ahead.

Three new medal events will be introduced at the 2020 Paralympics, more and more countries are

setting up paracanoe programs, and there's a long list of athletes from other para sports who are now trying out paracanoe, and loving it.

Marathon and ocean racing both showed again in 2019 why they are two of the most exciting disciplines in the ICF stable. The ocean racing world championships were held in the waters surrounding the beautiful French village of Quiberon, while the marathon world titles were contested on a very scenic course at Shaoxing in China.

Marathon and ocean racing require incredible stamina and cunning, and when they are played out in perfect surroundings, they can be among the most exciting sports in the world to watch. That was certainly the case in 2019.

Of course, our canoe sports would be nothing without the incredible efforts and passion of our athletes. Last year they lifted the bar even higher, returning superhuman performances, usually under enormous pressure.

Not everyone can win, not everyone gets to go to the Olympics or compete at a world championships. But what has consistently made canoeing fantastic is the focus of the athletes, and their desire to always give their all.

In 2019 we saw a lot of younger athletes coming through, in nearly every discipline. The signs are very good for the future, especially given the diversity and background of many of the young athletes who stepped up during the year.

Much of this is a direct result of the incredible work of our ICF canoe development programs. Young people who live in areas where canoeing is still very much in its infancy, and where facilities are often very limited or non-existent, were able to access the very best coaches and top-notch equipment.

Canoeing continues to thrive around the world, and our development programmes are introducing new athletes and new countries to top-level international competition. We can feel very proud of our achievements in these areas. What is particularly pleasing about these programmes is the commitment the athletes show to the sport, not just during the coaching sessions, but also in the years following. Many of the athletes go on to become coaches themselves, or canoeing administrators or equipment developers.

It really strengthens the presence of canoeing in these new corners of the globe, and augers well for the future growth of the sport.

So to 2020 – an Olympic and Paralympic year, so a very important milestone for canoe slalom, canoe sprint and paracanoe.

The Olympics and the Paralympics is the moment we get to shine, to showcase what we already know are incredibly exciting sports and athletes to a potential new

audience totaling in the millions. I am absolutely confident everyone involved, from the athletes to the officials, will once again put on a great show.

The Olympics and the Paralympics can lay the foundations for our sports into the future. Competition is getting stronger for places on the Games program, and all sports are aware they need to perform to maintain the status they currently enjoy.

But it is much more than that. It is also an opportunity to introduce new people, be they athletes, officials, volunteers or fans, to canoeing. And a chance to show the international media and potential sponsors what a thrilling sport we have.

It's why we devote so much time and effort to ensuring we get it right. Everyone who represents canoeing at an Olympics or Paralympics carries with them an enormous responsibility, but we have shown time and again we are up to the challenge.

2019 was a fantastic year for the international canoeing family. 2020 is sure to be even better.

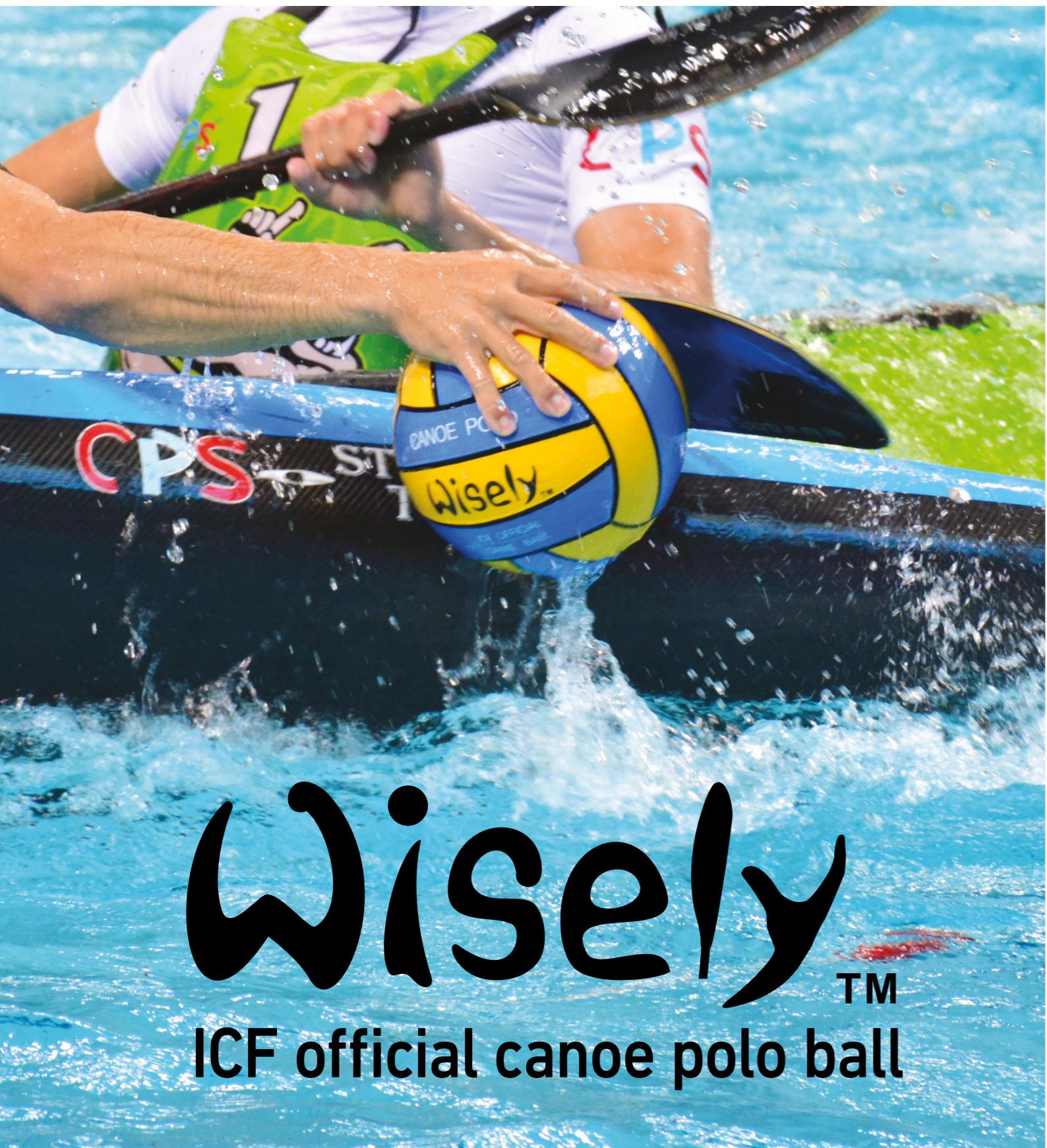


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CANOEING CONTINUES TO THRIVE AROUND THE WORLD, AND OUR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES ARE INTRODUCING NEW ATHLETES AND NEW COUNTRIES TO TOP-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION. WE CAN FEEL VERY PROUD OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN THESE AREAS.



Canoe Polo Series

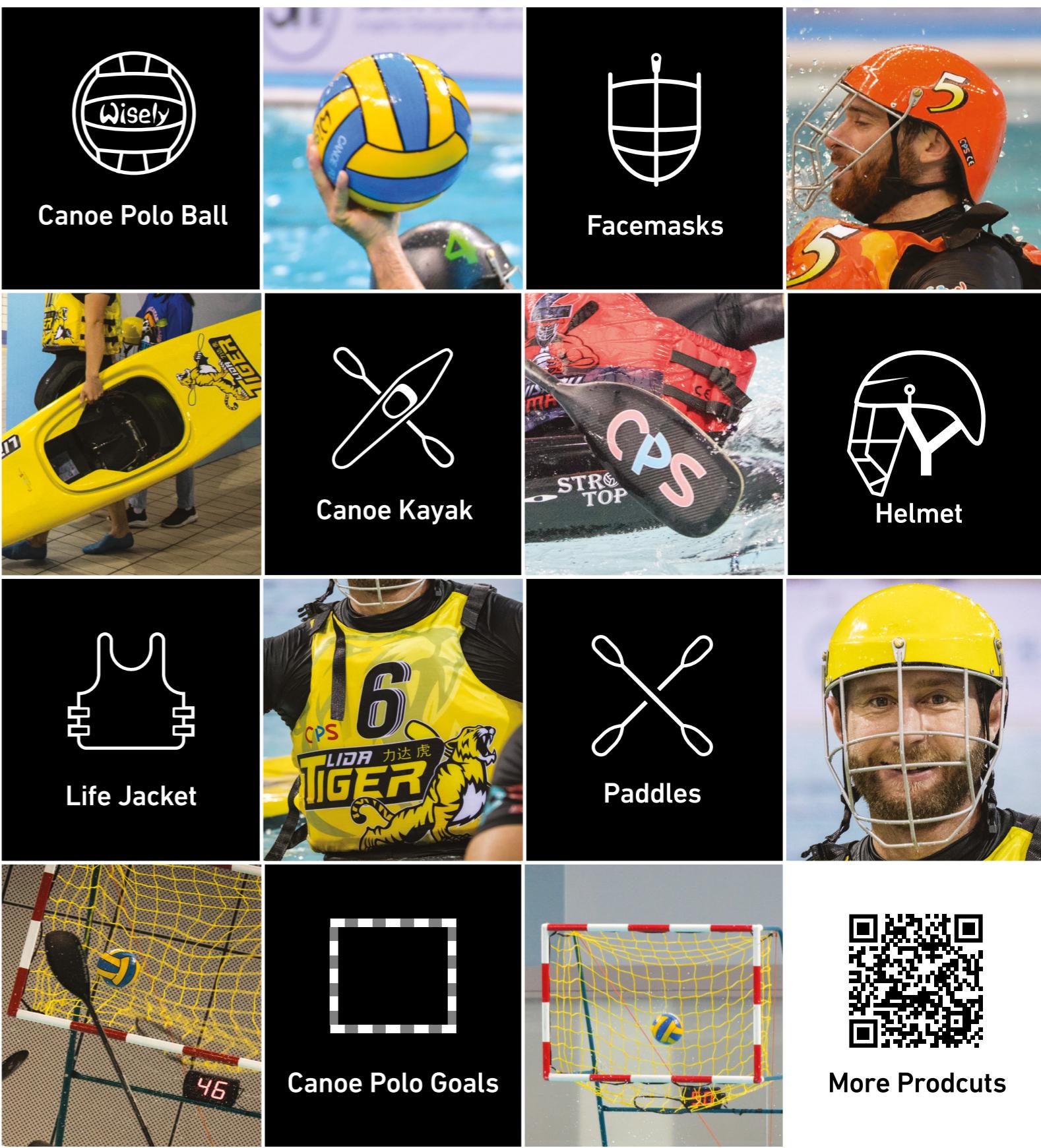


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CPS - STRONG
TOP



Wisely™



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SPRINT

World Championships



FACTS & FIGURES

Location:
Szeged,
Hungary

Video stream:
923k views (YouTube & Facebook)
516k peak concurrent viewers in China

Statistics:
98 nations took part
27 countries won medals

WikiPaddle:
[Canoe Sprint 101](#)
Click here to find out

SPRINT APPROACHES MILESTONE STRONGER THAN EVER.

TOKYO 2020 WILL BE SPRINT'S 20TH OLYMPICS.

In 2020 canoe sprint at the Olympic Games will officially turn 20. The sport has come a long way since it debuted in Berlin in 1936, and will reach several other important milestones in Tokyo.

For the first time ever, canoe sprint will have an equal number of men and women competing. Women's canoe will make its Olympic debut, with medals available in C1 200 and C2 500.

It set the scene for a fascinating 2019 ICF canoe sprint season, and especially the world championships and Olympic qualifiers at Szeged in Hungary, which lived up to its reputation as the spiritual home of canoe sprint with capacity crowds and an electric atmosphere.

New Zealand's Lisa Carrington proved herself the best female paddler in the world in 2019, Germany showed off the depth in their men's team, and Brazil's Isaquias dos Santos breaking through for the biggest win of his career were just some of the highlights in Hungary.

There was also the emergence of some new names, just one year out from the Olympics, the return of a champion, and more than a few surprises. It was a week befitting the occasion, and a great preview of what is looming as an incredible Olympics in Tokyo. It was a mixed week for the passionate Hungarian crowd. There was also much celebration among the capacity crowd when their women's team took gold in the highly anticipated K4 500 final, and euphoria when Balint Kopasz stared down the biggest names in the men's K1 1000 to claim his first world title.

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THIS IS JUST ONE RACE TODAY, AND IN 12 MONTHS WE HAVE ANOTHER ONE. IT'S REALLY WICKED TO KNOW THE HARD WORK I'VE PUT IN AND THE HARD TRAINING AND THE DIFFICULT TIMES DO PAY OFF.

But an incredible hush fell over the crowd when golden girl and Hungarian hero Danuta Kozak had two terrible days on the water. First she and partner Anna Karasz managed to get themselves disqualified in the women's K2 500 after easily winning their semi-final. Unbelievably their boat weighed in light.

And then the five-time Olympic gold medalist was left trailing in Carrington's wake in the K1 500, the event where she won gold in both London and Rio.

“

IT'S A LOT OF PRESSURE, BUT I THINK THAT'S PROBABLY HOW I KEEP PERFORMING AND STRIVING, TO HAVE THAT PRESSURE ON.



Russia men's C4

But a lot can change in 12 months, and anyone who wants to write off the chances of Kozak in Tokyo better be prepared to have egg on their face. It should be remembered, Kozak also missed out on gold in the year leading up to the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, but then had no trouble taking the ultimate prize one year later.

But nothing can and should be taken away from the performance of two-time Olympic champion, Carrington.

Unbeaten over 200 metres since 2011, it was her long overdue win in the K1 500 that brought the biggest smile to her face.

The New Zealander flew out to a commanding lead, and won easing down over Belarus's Volha Khudzenka, with Kozak well back in third.

"The 500 is a really tough event, and the girls I compete against are just amazing, so you have to bring your best game to the world champs," Carrington said.

"The 500 requires a bit more work and a bit more strategy, so for me it's cool to be able to go out there and execute the race that I wanted to."

"This is just one race today, and in 12 months we have another one. It's really wicked to know the hard work I've put in and the hard training and the difficult times do pay off."



CLICK HERE TO SEE TOKYO 2020'S ONE MINUTE, ONE SPORT VIDEO ON CANOE SPRINT



Spanish men's K4



CLICK HERE TO SEE HOW THE SPANISH K4 MEN'S TEAM HAVE ADJUSTED TO THE NEW DISTANCE FOR TOKYO 2020

At one time the 30-year-old was toying with the idea of racing for four gold medals in Tokyo – the K1 200 and 500, the K2 500 and the K4 500. No-one has ever done it before, but after mixed results in 2017 and 2018, the status of her quest is unknown.

She looks untouchable in the 200, picking up her seventh and maybe her most convincing K1 200 world title with almost two seconds to spare on 2016 Olympic silver medalist, Marta Walczykiewicz of Poland, with 2019 European champion Emma Jorgensen of Denmark third. Szeged was the course where in 2011 a nervous Carrington qualified for her first Olympics.

"I remember eight years ago, trying to qualify for my first Olympics, making the A final, all I could think about was had I qualified that quota spot for New Zealand," Carrington said.

"It meant a lot for me to do that eight years ago, and it still means a lot to me. It's quite cool to think I've qualified another spot for the Olympics."

"It's a lot of pressure, but I think that's probably how I keep performing and striving, to have that pressure on."

The much-anticipated showdown in the women's K4 500 turned into a tussle between home-town favourites

Roque Fernandes Dos Ramos
(São Tomé and Príncipe)Buly Da Conceicao Triste
(São Tomé and Príncipe)**View athlete bio****View athlete bio**

Hungary, and the formidable Belarusian combination. The home crowd proved decisive as Dora Bodonyi, Erika Medveczky, Tamara Csipes and Alida Dora Gazso kept Hungary's incredible record in the event intact.

"In Hungary in the K4 you have pressure all the time, because there is so much competition for places," Medveczky said.



Lisa Carrington
(New Zealand)

[View athlete bio](#)

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WATCH 2019 ICF
CANOE SPRINT
HIGHLIGHTS
FROM SZEGED



"It's hard because we have to win, and there is always pressure," Csipes, a K1 1000 gold medalist in Szeged, said.

In 2017 and 2018 it was Germany and New Zealand who looked the biggest threat to Hungary's dominance of the women's K4. They've now been overtaken by Belarus, but just how anyone can beat the Hungarians is hard to fathom.

The German men's K4 of Tom Leibscher, Ronald Rauhe, Max Rendschmidt and Max Lemke had to dig deep to defend their title against an impressive Spanish combination, before eventually finishing half a second clear.

The quartet have dominated the new Olympic distance race since 2017, and will start favourites in Tokyo. The crew has a good mix of age and experience, with Rauhe set to continue an Olympic career which began in Sydney in 2000.

"To be sure it would be six Olympics, but every time is special, it's emotional, especially with these four guys," Rauhe said.

"And it's a special thing for me because I've not been there in a K4. We could feel this today was not just a world championships, it was a fight for a place at the Olympics."

Another of the biggest names in world canoeing who came up short in Szeged was Germany's three-time Olympic gold medalist, Sebastian Brendel. Brazil's Isaquias dos

Santos had never won a major international gold medal in the C1 1000 before 2019, but finally broke through in Szeged by overrunning Brendel, who faded to finish fourth. "It was very important for me to step up," Isaquias said.

"I knew I had to work harder to get the gold. It doesn't come easy, but I was ready to get the gold. For sure this gives me confidence, but it's the daily work that is going to get me into the Olympics."

Germany's Max Hoff is in line for a fourth Olympics after teaming up with 20-year-old Jacob Schopf to win the men's K2 1000, finishing ahead of Spain and France. Hoff joined Schopf in early 2019 after regular partner, Marcus Gross, fell ill, and the pair have established themselves as Tokyo gold medal favourites.

"In 2017 I had some problems with motivation, but at the moment I am paddling because I like it, I have so much fun doing this," Hoff said.

"It is a dream if you are able to do it at this age like me, and that you have the chance and you are healthy and that you are strong enough."

"The quality in the German team is so high, so next year we have to show what we can also do," Schopf said.

"But it is my biggest aim now, to paddle in 2020 with Max." The women's canoe events were thrown into disarray after multiple world champion and Olympic favourite,

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"I KNEW I HAD TO WORK HARDER TO GET THE GOLD. IT DOESN'T COME EASY, BUT I WAS READY TO GET THE GOLD. FOR SURE THIS GIVES ME CONFIDENCE, BUT IT'S THE DAILY WORK THAT IS GOING TO GET ME INTO THE OLYMPICS."

Laurence Vincent-Lapointe, failed a drug test on the eve of the championships. The Canadian was banned from racing in Szeged.

China's Mengya Sun and Shixiao Xu took advantage of the absence of Vincent-Lapointe and Katie Vincent in the women's C2 500 to post a convincing win in the new Olympic event.

“

“THE HUNGARIAN FANS MEANT A LOT. I LOVE THE HUNGARIANS, AND MY FAVOURITE COURSE IS SZEGED. IT’S A HUGE FEELING THAT I CAN BEAT THE BEST PADDLERS AND PROVE THAT I AM ONE OF THE BEST IN THE WORLD.”

The pair were able to withstand a challenge by home-town favourites Kincso Takacs and Virag Balla, who had triumphed over the Canadians at the ICF world cup in Duisburg.

“This is just the beginning for us, because this is qualification for the Olympics,” Sun said.

“We have a very strong country, and a very good group and a good leader and we get lots of support so we can concentrate on what we do.”

In the women’s C1 200 it was 17-year-old Nevin Harrison, barely known even in her own country, who took advantage of the absence of the world champion to win her first world title. Earlier in 2019 she won C1 gold at the Pan American Games, but the American threw herself into medal contention for next year’s C1 200 Olympic debut with a stunning gold in Szeged.

Vincent-Lapointe was the only big name missing from the final, but it didn’t phase Harrison, who beat home Russian Olesia Romasenko and Belarus’s Alena Nazdrova.

“I was going into that final thinking, man I’m just happy to be here, and I never ever felt that a medal was possible, and especially gold,” Harrison said.

“Oh my gosh, it’s been my dream since I was a little kid to make the Olympics, it’s so good to be here.”

The men’s K1 1000 will be one of the most eagerly anticipated events at the 2020 Olympics. There have been seven different world champions since 2011, and in 2019, in front of a euphoric home crowd, it was Balint Kopasz who took his turn at the head of the line.

The roar of the crowd helped Kopasz fly home over the last 250 metres of the K1 1000 to mow down reigning world champion Fernando Pimenta and Olympic silver medalist Josef Dostal to claim the biggest result of his career.

“I am really happy that I could beat the best champions in the world,” Kopasz said.



Nevin Harrison (USA)

[View athlete bio](#)

“The Hungarian fans meant a lot. I love the Hungarians, and my favourite course is Szeged. It’s a huge feeling that I can beat the best paddlers and prove that I am one of the best in the world.”

Dostal took the silver, with Pimenta, the reigning world champion, third.

Great Britain’s Liam Heath returned to the course where he qualified in the K2 200 for the 2012 Olympics to win his second K1 200 title, and in doing so booked a place for his country in Tokyo in 2020.

“Eight years ago, at this regatta, I qualified for London 2012 with Jonny Schofield, and it means a hell of a lot after all these years to do it again,” Heath said.

“It was a bit of a rocky start to the year with my coach, but we got through that and I’ve had one of my best years ever.

“I’m really happy with the way today has gone. It would be nice to finish a bit further in front, but a win is great when you are facing the best athletes in the world.”

Heath, who took a year off from 200 metre racing in 2018, beat Serbia’s Strahinja Stefanovic and defending world champion, Carlos Garrote of Spain.

Belarus’s Volha Khudzenka and Maryna Litvinchuk



China men's C2



**CLICK HERE TO SEE
THE CHINESE TEAM ARE
GROWING IN STRENGTH
AS THEY PREPARE FOR
THE OLYMPICS**

also booked a quota for Tokyo with an impressive win in the women’s K2 500. They followed up their impressive K2 200 title with a clear win over Poland’s Karolina Naja and Anna Pulawska, with Slovenia’s Spela Ponomarenko Janic and Anja Osterman third.

“We understand that at the Olympics there will be tough countries to beat, so we are not relaxed now,” Khudzenka said.

“We must continue to work into the future.”

China continued its strong canoe performance with a powerful win in the men’s C2 1000. Hao Liu and Hao Wang held out Cuba and Brazil to win the gold, following on from the win by the C2 500 crew 24 hours earlier.

“This is not just about us, this is about all of China and our strength in the canoe,” Wang said.



Danuta Kozak (Hungary)

[View athlete bio](#)

RESULTS

Men C1 1000

1.	QUEIROZ Isaquias (BRA)	3:59.23
2.	KACZOR Tomasz (POL)	4:00.92
3.	BART Adrien (FRA)	4:01.55

Men C2 1000

1.	LIU/WANG (CHI)	3:40.55
2.	TORRES/JORGE (CUB)	3:41.46
3.	SILVA/QUEIROZ (BRA)	3:44.34

Men K1 200

1.	HEATH Liam (GBR)	34.86
2.	STEFANOVIC Strahinja (SRB)	35.04
3.	GARROTE Carlos (ESP)	35.12

Men K1 1000

1.	KOPASZ Balint (HUN)	3:36.07
2.	DOSTAL Josef (CZE)	3:37.31
3.	PIMENTA Fernando (POR)	3:37.63



Jacob Schopf (Germany)

Max Hoff (Germany)

[View athlete bio](#)[View athlete bio](#)[Click here to find out full results](#)**Men K2 1000**

1.	HOFF/SCHOPF (GER)	3:20.53
2.	CUBELOS/PENA (ESP)	3:21.79
3.	CARRE/HUBERT (FRA)	3:22.96

Men K4 500

1.	GERMANY	1:19.26
2.	SPAIN	1:19.77
3.	SLOVAKIA	1:20.96

Women C1 200

1.	HARRISON Nevin (USA)	49.30
2.	ROMASENKO Olesia (RUS)	49.74
3.	NAZDROVA Alena (BLR)	49.99

Women C2 500

1.	SUN/XU (CHN)	2:02.81
2.	TAKACS/BALLA (HUN)	2:04.49
3.	KLIMAVA/MAKARCHANKA (BLR)	2:07.74

Women K1 200

1.	CARRINGTON Lisa (NZL)	39.39
2.	WALCZYKIEWICZ Marta (POL)	41.33
3.	JORGENS (DEN)/PORTELA (ESP)	41.34

Women K1 500

1.	CARRINGTON Lisa (NZL)	1:55.76
2.	KHUDZENKA Volha (BLR)	1:57.39
3.	KOZAK Danuta (HUN)	1:58.01

Women K2 500

1.	LITVINCHUK/KHUDZENKA (BLR)	1:42.55
2.	NAJA/PULAWSKA (POL)	1:43.34
3.	PONOMARENKO/OSTERMAN (SLO)	1:44.21

Women K4 500

1.	HUNGARY	1:32.91
2.	BELARUS	1:33.69
3.	POLAND	1:34.77




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SLALOM

World Championships



FACTS & FIGURES

Location: La Seu d'Urgell, Spain

Video stream: 7.2 million views in China

WikiPaddle: [Canoe Slalom 101](#)
[Click here to find out](#)

Statistics: 63 nations from 5 continents
378 athletes competed in La Seu

OLYMPIC SLALOM JIGSAW STARTS TO TAKE SHAPE

LURE OF THE GAMES LIFTS ATHLETES TO NEW LEVELS

There's something very special about a canoe slalom season the year before an Olympics.

The intensity increases. The excitement skyrockets. Nerves are frayed, emotions overflow, dreams are made, dreams are shattered.

On the line is a place at the next Olympic Games, the pinnacle of a canoe slalom athlete's career. It's a long process, often involving bucketloads of tears, sleepless nights and tested relationships. And for many, by year's end the hardest part is still to come.

By seasons end in 2019 most of the quotas for Tokyo 2020 had been allocated. A handful of athletes, like Australia's Jessica Fox and the Great Britain quartet of Kimberley Woods, Mallory Franklin, Bradley Forbes-Cryans and Adam Burgess, already have their places confirmed.

Other countries know they'll be in Tokyo – they're just not sure yet who will represent them.

The 2019 ICF canoe slalom world championships is where it all went on the line for the best paddlers in the world. There were several surprises, the emergence of exciting young talent, and a handful of household names who left La Seu with their Olympic dreams over.

All of this unfolding on a course which is so important in the history of canoe slalom. In 1992 in Barcelona canoe slalom was finally re-introduced to the Olympic programme after a 20-year absence. The

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I ALWAYS KNEW THAT I COULD WIN A MEDAL, BUT I DIDN'T THINK IT COULD BE A GOLD MEDAL. I THINK I WILL NEED SOME DAYS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED HERE.

competition was held in La Seu, and even though the venue was three hours out of Barcelona, the atmosphere and excitement was memorable.

So with so much history all around them, and possible places at the Tokyo Olympics up for grabs, which athletes stood tall at the 2019 ICF World Championships?

Czech Jiri Prskavec and German Andrea Herzog took world titles, while Rio gold medallist Joe Clarke sensationally missed out of the British Olympic team on a dramatic final day of competition in La Seu.



Cedric Joly
(France)

[View athlete bio](#)

Prskavec added the 2019 K1 world title to the crown he won in 2015, while Herzog had double cause for celebration, picking up her first C1 world title as well as securing her ticket to Tokyo 2020.

The shock came in the men's K1 final, where Great Britain's Clarke, the Rio 2016 Olympic gold medalist, was squeezed out of the British Olympic team by Bradley Forbes-Cryans, who finished one place and just 0.89 of a second ahead in the final.

Herzog was assured of victory in the women's C1, after reigning world champion Jessica Fox picked up a two-second penalty for a gate touch in the final. Herzog's final margin over the Australian was 0.94 of a second, with Austria's Nadine Weratschnig finishing third.

"I still feel really nervous, because I can't believe that I can be a world champion and catch that Olympic spot," Herzog said.

"I always knew that I could win a medal, but I didn't think it could be a gold medal. I think I will need some days to understand what happened here."

"This has been a tough year for me, but I thought it would have to be a medal here. I just kept reminding myself that it was my turn, and that if I paddled well it could be enough for an Olympic spot."

The Czech Republic won't finalise its Olympic team until early 2020, but 2016 Rio bronze medalist Jiri Prskavec put himself in the box position with a K1 world title.

The 26-year-old ended a long run of minor placings with victory in the 2019 world cup final in Prague earlier in the month, and then followed up with an electric final in La Seu. As he did four years ago, he became world champion on the eve of the Olympic Games.

"This is so incredible for me, after winning the final world

cup in Prague, and now this," Prskavec said.

"I felt really in good shape. This is the biggest race of the year, and always the one before the Olympics is something special. Countries are trying to win Olympic quota places and there are individual selections, so it's super nice to be a world champion again."

"This is our first selection race, and I was coming into it to show my best. It was really hard to concentrate, but I did it in the end and I'm now a world champion again."

Local hope, David Llorente, posted the quickest raw time on the course, but a two-second penalty dropped him to the silver medal. But his result confirmed his place at the Olympics, and a return for Spain after the country missed the men's C1 in Rio.



[CLICK HERE TO SEE TOKYO 2020'S ONE MINUTE, ONE SPORT VIDEO ON CANOE SLALOM](#)



Evy Leibfarth
(USA)

[View athlete bio](#)



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH USA'S EVY LEIBFARTH ON HER RISE IN SUCCESS AND LOOKING AHEAD TO TOKYO 2020'S OLYMPICS'](#)

“

I FELT REALLY IN GOOD SHAPE. THIS IS THE BIGGEST RACE OF THE YEAR, AND ALWAYS THE ONE BEFORE THE OLYMPICS IS SOMETHING SPECIAL.

Another local, Joan Crespo, finished third.

Two first-time world champions were crowned and a long list of athletes booked their tickets to Tokyo on an emotional first day of finals competition in La Seu.

France's Cedric Joly put a difficult season behind him to take gold in the men's C1, while Slovenia's Eva Tercelj not only celebrated her first ever world championship podium, but also secured the women's K1 gold.

Tears flowed freely for 24-year-old Joly after he notched up the biggest win of his career.

"I already cried after the semi-final, it was my first final of the season, the year has been super hard for me," Joly said.

“

**I FEEL REALLY
EMOTIONAL
RIGHT NOW, IT IS
UNBELIEVABLE. I
REALLY HAD A HARD
TIME QUALIFYING
TO THE TEAM THIS
YEAR, SO THE
WHOLE SEASON WAS
COMPLICATED**

"I moved to Paris, and I changed quite a number of things this summer, and it's paid off. It was an amazing run, I love racing here, the crowd cheered me up from the first gate until the bottom."

Joly finished 0.51 of a second ahead of Spain's Ander Elosegi, who is off to a fourth Olympic Games, while Slovenia's Luka Bozic picked up a bronze, a two-second penalty for a gate touch ruling him out of the gold medal.

Slovenia's Eva Tercelj was born in 1992, the year the Olympics came to La Seu. 27 years later she found herself on top of the podium after defeating Australia's reigning world champion, Jessica Fox, and New Zealand's Rio 2016 Olympic silver medalist, Luuka Jones.

12 months earlier at the 2018 world championships she couldn't even make the semi-finals.

"This is still a dream for me, I was always dreaming about it, and now it is the best end of season that I could imagine," Tercelj said.

"One year ago it was a really hard experience for me, but I think I learned a lot. It was the mindset in which I started this season, I think this is the right comeback. I can see that it is still worth fighting for."



Eva Tercelj
(Slovenia)

[View athlete bio](#)



**CLICK HERE FOR
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ICF
CANOE SLALOM WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIPS IN
SPAIN**

Jessica Fox (Australia)

[View athlete bio](#)



**CLICK HERE TO WATCH
ALEXANDER SLAFKOVSKY'S
EMOTIONAL INSIGHT ON
HIS LAST OLYMPIC CHANCE**

RESULTS

[★ Click here to find out full results](#)

Men's C1

1.	JOLY Cedric (FRA)	90.84 sec. (0 penalties)
2.	ELOSEGI Ander (ESP)	91.35 sec. (0)
3.	BOZIC Luka (SLO)	91.92 sec. (2)

Women's K1

1.	TERCELJ Eva (SLO)	94.27 sec. (0)
2.	FOX Jessica (AUS)	94.69 sec. (0)
3.	JONES Luuka (NZL)	94.77 sec. (0)

Women's C1

1.	HERZOG Andrea (GER)	100.52 sec. (0)
2.	FOX Jessica (AUS)	101.46 sec. (2)
3.	WERATSCHNIG Nadine (AUT)	106.45 sec. (4)

Men's K1

1.	PRSKAVEC Jiri (CZE)	84.26 sec. (0)
2.	LLORENTE David (ESP)	85.96 sec. (2)
3.	CRESPO Joan (ESP)	87.22 sec. (0)

Mixed C2

1.	FISEROVA/JANE (CZE)	109.65 sec. (2)
2.	STACH/POCHWALA (POL)	113.36 sec. (2)
3.	MASEK/VOJTOVA (CZE)	114.57 sec. (2)

“

**ONE YEAR AGO IT WAS A REALLY HARD
EXPERIENCE FOR ME, BUT I THINK I
LEARNED A LOT. IT WAS THE MINDSET IN
WHICH I STARTED THIS SEASON, I THINK
THIS IS THE RIGHT COMEBACK. I CAN SEE
THAT IT IS STILL WORTH FIGHTING FOR.**

Among those who did confirm their Olympic selections in La Seu were Australia's Jessica Fox, Germany's Ricarda Funk, New Zealand's Luuka Jones, Italy's Steffi Horn and Great Britain's Kimberley Woods in the women's K1.

In the men's C1, joining Ander Elosegi in Tokyo will be Switzerland's

"I think I did a great step forward this season, I have been very confident all season, which is so important."

Despite their world titles, both Joly and Tercelj were two of a handful of athletes who have still to confirm their ticket to Tokyo. They have qualified the quota for their country, but individual selections have not been finalised.

Thomas Koechlin, Canada's Cameron Smedley and Great Britain's Adam Burgess.

In the mixed C2, the Czech pairing of Tereza Fiserova and Jakub Jane made up for missing a medal at the past two world championships with a big win in the final event of the weekend.

Fiserova and Jane finished 3.71 seconds ahead of Poland's defending world champions, Aleksandra Stach and Marcin Pochwala.

"This year's result is fantastic, because for two world championships we have not done well," Fiserova said. "I'm happy. After my C1 run, this is fantastic. This was my fourth run, which was hard, but I have a very good paddling partner."

The bronze medal went to 2018 bronze medalists, Veronika Vojtova and Jan Masek, of the Czech Republic.



CANOE DEVELOPMENT



FACTS & FIGURES

Statistics:
13 training camps were held around the world in 2019.
260 athletes were involved.
45 coaches were involved.

THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF CANOEING WORLDWIDE

NEW COUNTRIES, NEW ATHLETES, NEW DREAMS

Canoeing is already one of the most popular recreational activities in the world, and one of the oldest.

Elite participation is also on the rise around the globe, thanks in no small part to the International Canoe Federation's development program. In 2019 alone, the ICF conducted talent programs on four different continents.

The brief is simple – take canoeing to areas of the world where the sport is still very much in a development stage, or where resources and administration is limited. The key to the success of the program is the enthusiasm of the athletes, and that is never in short supply.

In 2019 there were programs for slalom and wildwater, marathon, sprint and paracanoe. The courses covered athletes, coaches and judges. Nearly all participants were new to the sport, but shared the common goal of making it to the top. Slalom has been running a very popular and successful 3-continents program, which last year took in Nigeria, the Philippines and Chile – countries that have very little elite canoeing history, but have access to one important ingredient – water.

Slalom also conducted a very well attended camp in La Seu, in conjunction with the 2019 ICF canoe slalom and wildwater world championships. Athletes with dreams of competing in Olympic Hopes events and the Youth Olympic Games enjoyed the opportunity to learn from the best, on a former Olympic venue.

The ICF canoe slalom development team also visited Iran in 2019, to conduct what is known as an "expand and extend" program. These camps usually feature athletes that have attended pre-

“
IT'S BEEN SO INSPIRING HELPING THEM. THEY ARE LEARNING VERY QUICKLY AND I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO WATCHING THEM RACE.

vious sessions, and are looking to build on what they learned.

The camps can also sometimes be run by graduates of former projects.

The ICF marathon team held a talent identification programme in Shaoxing, China, while sprint courses were held in Albania and South Africa which underlined the interest and expansion potential for canoeing.

There were strong turnouts in both South Africa and Albania. While South Africa has a strong paddling history, Albania is a new federation and has an exciting future.

The Albanian National Canoe Federation came into existence in 2017, and 22 people took part in a six-day Olympic Solidarity canoe sprint level one course in late 2019.

The ICF and the European Canoe Association, with generous financial support from the Olympic Solidarity program, agreed to donate six racing kayaks and ten kayak paddles to help the sport develop.

Almost all the attendees at the course came from sporting backgrounds, and spent up to seven hours a day in both theory and practical sessions. An exam was held at the end of the course, with 11 people, ten men and one woman, passing.

"The water and weather conditions were not suitable for beginner paddlers because of safety concerns, so we did the practical sessions in an open swimming pool," ICF expert, Csaba Szanto, said.

"This venue gave more confidence to the attendees, and at the end of the practical sessions, several people were able to sit in the kayak and paddle with the technical knowledge they had learned."

"The participants and the federation are very keen to develop canoe sprint in Albania. The development of canoeing requires further attention and equipment support from the ICF and ECA, and support to obtain gender equality in athletes and technical staff."

There were 18 participants at a level one assistant canoe and sprint coaching course in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa, last month, and all successfully passed to the next stage. It followed a similar course run in July which attracted 13 participants, of which all but one passed the final examination.

"We spent a little additional time expanding on the theory and application of training program design, as the coaches felt this was an area which they lacked knowledge," course facilitator Gregory van Heerden said.

"I believe the course objectives were met, and the experience was worthwhile for all involved. I look forward to seeing how the coaches progress and make canoeing a fun, safe and challenging experience for all involved."

“

WE THINK THIS IS A GOOD CHANCE FOR US TO SPREAD THIS SPORT EVEN FURTHER WHEN WE GO BACK, AND THEY SEE THERE WAS A WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, EGYPTIANS WERE THERE, LETS DO IT AS WELL



Nordino Mussa (Mozambique)

[View athlete bio](#)

Mussa Chamaune (Mozambique)

[View athlete bio](#)



The International Canoe Federation ran a SUP development camp in Qingdao for athletes who are still learning the sport, and the results were impressive.

More than 20 athletes from 14 countries took part, and all were ready to take the start line when the world championships got underway.

"A lot of these athletes had done very little stand up paddling before this week, but turned up with a great attitude and a willingness to learn," ICF development camp co-ordinator, Andrey Kraytor, said.

"It's been so inspiring helping them. They are learning very quickly and I'm looking forward to watching them race this weekend."

"The most exciting part is the chance to develop our sport even further. These athletes are going to be great ambassadors for stand up paddling when they return home."

Egypt's Jomana Ismail Attia is typical of many of the athletes who are taking part in the camp. She paddles on the Nile River in Cairo and the Red Sea, but has never had the support to take her to the next level.

The ICF world championships and development camp opened the door for her.

"It's fun, the coaches are super good, very helpful with tips," she said.

"We have training in the morning and afternoon, we are training on different beaches and trying the boards we are using."

"I'm learning a lot. In Egypt we don't have trainers, so this is a chance to learn from the pros. It's a very good initiative from the ICF to do this development camp."



**CLICK HERE TO SEE
THE EXPAND AND
EXTEND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME HELD IN
CHILE**

The ICF hopes the development camp will help the growth of stand up paddling in parts of the world where the sport is still in its infancy. Jomana Ismail Attia was already planning how she could use all the skills she learned when she returned home.

"First of all I feel proud, because it's like the first official world championships, and Egypt is represented. And there are no other Arab countries, so we are representing the Arab region," she said.

"We think this is a good chance for us to spread this sport even further when we go back, and they see there was a world championships, Egyptians were there, let's do it as well."

Training is one thing, competing will be another. But Jomana is not allowing herself to be daunted by the challenge ahead.

"I'm trying not to think about it, I don't want to get scared," she said.

"I'm pretty confident right now after the training and having been in the water that I will finish it stan-

ding, and that's what I am here for. It's my first world event ever, and it's pretty competitive with people from all over the world who have been doing this for years."

"We are new here, so it's just a good chance to be here and paddle with these guys by our side."

In Hungary a talent identification program was held in the lead up to the 2019 ICF canoe sprint and paracanoe world championships.

The talent development project, run jointly by the International Canoe Federation (ICF) and the Hungarian Canoe Federation, was first run four years earlier. The participants of the project are constantly developing, and many of them had the chance to win an Olympic quota for Tokyo.

With women's sprint canoe set to make its debut at the Tokyo Olympics, the ICF's TIP project was launched to support the development of women's canoe. Since then, men's canoe and kayak athletes have also been included in the programme.

The project consisted of a month-long training camp organised by the Hungarian Canoe Federation two times a year, where 45 athletes from 27 countries are trained by top Hungarian coaches.

"In recent years the ICF and the Hungarian Canoe Federation have given all the support for the athletes, who have



taken part or are currently taking part in the TIP programme," András Szabó, the Hungarian head of the project, said.

"People with different cultural and religious backgrounds are sticking together and working in an amazing atmosphere. Basically, our project functions now as a big family, and our athletes are very motivated and getting more and more successful."

"For instance, our North Korean and Vietnamese athletes have a clear chance to win an Olympic quota in Szeged, and in case this happens, it will be a historical moment for every one of us."

Apart from the atmosphere, the conditions in the camp were also excellent. The coaching team included Olympic champion canoeist Imre Pulai, nine-times world champion Tímea Paksy, and László Tóth, former coach of Olympic champion Gabriella Szabó, who has just started working with the women and men kayakers.

"I love coaching when I can get to know new cultures at the same time," Tóth said.

"I enjoy working with these athletes, because I can see that they are very excited about the work we do. They never complain, but they ask many questions and are eager to learn. I can only say positive things about the team."



**I ENJOY WORKING WITH THESE
ATHLETES, BECAUSE I CAN SEE THAT
THEY ARE VERY EXCITED ABOUT THE
WORK WE DO. THEY NEVER COMPLAIN,
BUT THEY ASK MANY QUESTIONS AND
ARE EAGER TO LEARN.**



«The camp is also organised in an outstanding way, all the participants received almost new Nelo and Plastex boats for the world championships from the manufacturers, and the lodging, the water conditions and the food are all excellent.»

The groups spend a month together two times a year. In 2019 they had a three-week training camp in Hungary before the World Cup in Duisburg, to where they travelled together, and then they competed in the world championships in Szeged after working together for three weeks in Budapest.

«We are like a national team at the competitions,» Imre Pulai said, who is the coach of the men's canoeists.

«We pay attention to the athletes getting on the water on time, we collect their bib numbers, we set their boats and help them with technical advice.»

Foreign coaches also take part in the project, who mainly come to Hungary to learn. According to Imre Pulai, there are some athletes who will also use the knowledge gained in the camp as a coach in the future.

«Now they compete for 4-5 years more, but they might never reach the Olympics,» he said.

«However, they may be coaches in the future, who could recruit potential athletes in their home countries, and change the lives of 20-30 children from less fortunate backgrounds through sport.»

«If this happens, our work was not in vain.»

The International Canoe Federation's first talent identification camp for paracanoe athletes was considered labelled a tremendous success.

Seven athletes and two coaches from as far afield as

Chile, Egypt and India took part in the paracanoe camp in Budapest, Hungary, ahead of the first ICF Paracanoe and Canoe Sprint World Cup in Poznan, Poland.

The chair of the ICF's paracanoe committee, John Edwards, said the camp underlined the growth of paracanoe around the world.

«This is our first dedicated paracanoe talent ID camp for the ICF, and Egypt and Colombia are being welcomed at the ICF competition level for the first time,» Mr Edwards said.

«USA, India and Chile are expanding their teams through this project, and we are now preparing for a larger TIP Camp in August at the world championships.»

One of the key objectives of the camp was to increase the number of athletes competing in the women's VL2 category, which will make its Paralympic debut in Tokyo. Three of the paddlers taking part in Budapest were classified, and all seven athletes were expected to compete in the world cup.

The camp was run by Jean Christophe Gonzeaud, who said that after getting over initial translation issues, he was struck by the dedication and determination of each of the athletes.

«The strong desire of personal improvement of the athletes is inspiring,» he said.

«They all want to do their best and it's a pleasure as a coach to work in such conditions. Each day the athletes had the opportunity to see other athletes from the Hungarian paracanoe team and sometimes train together, and also meet on the water or during lunch time some of the best international canoe sprint experts.»

«They had the chance to share the Duna River everyday with a multitude of young paddlers paddling with a communicative enthusiasm on all kind of boats.»

Athletes from Nigeria and Armenia, who had delays to their visa process, joined the rest of the squad in the world cup in Poznan. It was the first time athletes from Egypt, Colombia, Nigeria and South Korea competed in a paracanoe world cup.

The focus for those running the TIP camp during the world cup was to observe how the athletes dealt with a competition environment. Time management, conserving energy and the classification system were all important.

For the athletes the TIP camp was an eye-opening experience.





"I didn't know what to expect in Budapest when we practiced 100 metres. I felt like some runs were better than others," USA's Kaitlyn Verfuerth said.

"All I can hope is that I can improve on my past times and try my best. I felt like I learned a lot from this camp and I hope to be able to use what I learn next week and when I go home to train."

For Chile's Jocelyn Munoz it was all about overcoming physical hurdles.

"I have constant pain in the back, which makes it difficult to maintain the abdominal balance, because I don't have trunk control so it is difficult to maintain the canoe to the right," she said.

"I know that with the right training and with more experience I could be a good canoe paddler."

Colombia's Jorge Moreno was thrilled just to be at the camp.

"I learnt a lot and improved thanks to the support and collaboration of Jean-Christophe, the leader of this TIP camp," he said.

"It was like a dream to be in Budapest. I would like to thank the Hungarian Federation, and especially the International Canoe Federation (ICF) which made it possible for me to fulfil this dream to come here and participate in this camp."

India's Prachi Yadav and Devidas Mahadev Patil are used to paddling in very hot conditions, on waterways that can be quite environmentally challenging.

Budapest was a big change.

"In this camp I loved paddling in a clean river. I've never paddled when it's so cold but now it's a good experience," Prachi said.

"I appreciate the practice given by the best coach of the world."

"In India we paddle with a temperature of 45 degrees," Devidas said.

"Here, even if the weather is cold, its good conditions. I appreciate the water being so clean."



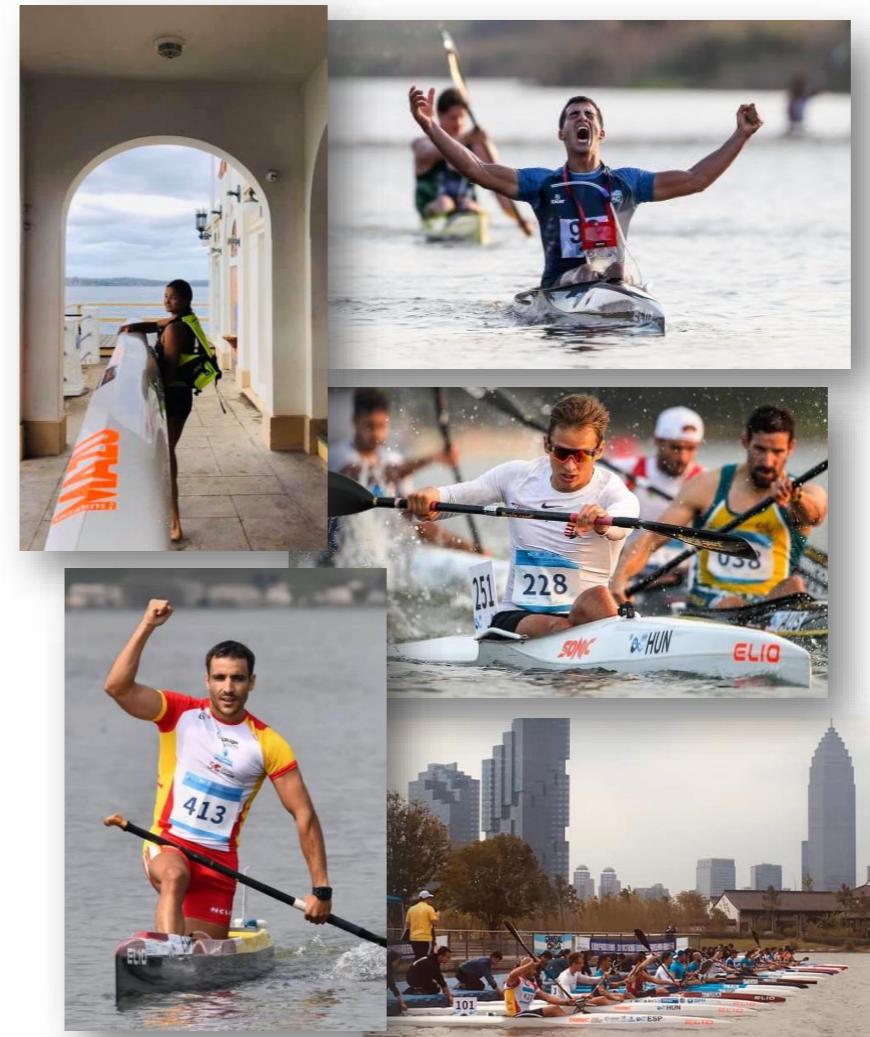
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OCEAN RACING

World Championships



FACTS & FIGURES

Location:
Quiberon,
France 

Statistics: 27 countries - 245 athletes
For the first time a test event in paracanoe was held

WikiPaddle:
[Ocean Racing 101](#)
Click here to find out

A FOCUSED SEAN RICE CLIMBS BACK ON TOP

There was a time, not so long ago, that Sean Rice toyed with the idea of changing nationalities.

It wasn't crazy at all. South African Rice was living in the UK, had set up his own business there, had family connections and was spending a lot of time training on English waterways.

Also South Africa has a lot of world-class ocean racing and surf-ski paddlers, of which Sean was just one – albeit a very good one, with world championship titles and gold medals from all over the globe to his name. By contrast, the UK talent pool is relatively shallow.

But it's a big call to turn your back on your birth country, especially when you've made your mark as an international athlete proudly competing under your flag.

Rice went as far as lodging the relevant paper work, but revealed on the eve of this year's ICF ocean racing world championships that he was, and always would be, a proud South African.

He had imagined himself standing on a podium, singing an unfamiliar anthem under an unfamiliar flag. It was a scenario that didn't sit comfortably with him.

Later that day Rice raced in Saint-Pierre de Quiberon, France, like a man who had the weight of the world lifted off his shoulders, storming to an emotional ICF world title, his second.

Rice won the very first ICF world title in 2013, but then had his colours lowered by Australia's Cory Hill in 2015 and 2017, but made the most of the good conditions on Wednesday.

“
THIS MORNING I WAS JUST OVERWHELMED WITH NERVES, BUT I'M ECSTATIC NOW. I HAD A ROUGH MID-YEAR THIS YEAR, BUT I CAME BACK FROM THAT PRETTY MOTIVATED.



Sean Rice
(South Africa)

[View athlete bio](#) 

“

I HONESTLY THOUGHT I WAS LOST, I HAD NO IDEA WHERE I WAS GOING, SO I WAS GLAD WHEN THE BOYS STARTED COMING PAST AT ABOUT SEVEN KILOMETRES, I JUST FOLLOWED THEIR LINES.



Simon Garbett
(Great Britain)

[View athlete bio](#)

He finished the 22-kilometre course 38 seconds ahead of his younger brother, Kenny, with Australia's Hill a further 14 seconds back in third.

"It was far from relaxed, but I had a good feeling yesterday," Rice said.

"This morning I was just overwhelmed with nerves, but I'm ecstatic now. To have Kenny on the podium too, it's so amazing. I had a rough mid-year this year, but I came back from that pretty motivated."

"I won in 2013, and I've had some ups and downs in these last years before getting on top again. So much has changed in my life. It's quite emotional, this is big for me."



Bridgitte Hartley
(South Africa)

[View athlete bio](#)



MCKENZIE PROVIDES THE SHOCK IN WOMEN'S RACE.

25-year-old Danielle McKenzie admitted she was shocked to win the women's race, finishing more than one minute ahead of pre-race favourite and defending champion, Hayley Nixon of South Africa, while New Zealand teammate Teneale Hatton was third.

McKenzie had already competed in top level competitions in both surfski and triathlon before turning her hand to ocean racing. France was her first ICF ocean racing world championships.

"I actually can't believe it," McKenzie said.

"I got five kilometres into my paddle and then I just went off on my own. I honestly thought I was

lost, I had no idea where I was going, so I was glad when the boys started coming past at about seven kilometres, I just followed their lines.

"As far as race plans went, I pretty well had nothing – just go hard. It's so awesome to come to a third sport and compete for a first time and have a win."

Australia's Jemma Smith took the women's U23 title and was fourth woman overall to cross the finish line, while South Africa's Joshua Fenn was 10th overall but the first U23 male.

In junior competition, USA's Katriana Swetish won the women's title, while Ulvard Hart made it a clean sweep for South Africa in the men's categories.



Valentin Henot
(France)

[View athlete bio](#)



Danielle McKenzie
(New Zealand)

[View athlete bio](#)

“

AS FAR AS RACE PLANS WENT, I PRETTY WELL HAD NOTHING – JUST GO HARD.

RESULTS

[Click here to find out full results](#)

Men

1.	RICE Sean (RSA)	1:34.15
2.	RICE Kenneth (RSA)	+38
3.	HILL Cory (AUS)	+52

Women

1.	MCKENZIE Danielle (NZL)	1:43.48
2.	NIXON Hayley (RSA)	+1.20
3.	HATTON Teneale (NZL)	+2.42

U23 - Men

1.	FENN Joshua (RSA)	1:39.05
2.	HENOT Hector (FRA)	+1.16
3.	HAVARD Noah (AUS)	+3.00

U23 - Women

1.	SMITH Jemma (AUS)	1:46.59
2.	MASSIE Brianna (AUS)	+3.22
3.	PURCHASE Kyeta (RSA)	+5.23

Junior - Men

1.	HART Ulvard (RSA)	1:40.36
2.	GUTIERREZ Jorge (ESP)	+4.18
3.	FENN Matthew (RSA)	+4.35

Junior - Women

1.	SWETISH Katriana (USA)	1:57.13
2.	SHIPWAY-CARR Jazmin (AUS)	+5.09
3.	DEWASTE Claire (FRA)	+5.35

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STAND UP PADDLING

World Championships



FACTS & FIGURES



Location:
Qingdao,
China



Video stream:
942k impressions from USA Connor Baxter's Instagram takeover
5.2 million views online



Statistics: 42 countries entered
More than 200 athletes took part
14 countries took part in a SUP development camp



WikiPaddle:
[Stand Up Paddling 101](#)
[Click here to find out](#)

SUP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS BREAK ALL THE RECORDS

QINGDAO TURNS ON A SHOW FOR WORLD'S BEST PADDLERS

The International Canoe Federation's first stand up paddling world championships finished with record viewing figures, record country and athlete numbers and record-breaking winning times after three days competition in Qingdao in China.

More than 200 athletes from 42 countries attracted tens of thousands of viewers across the social media channels of the ICF and its media partners, making it the biggest SUP world championships ever held. Highlights included American Connor Baxter setting the fastest ever time for the 200 metre sprint, double gold for France's Olivia Piana, and medals shared across 18 countries and five continents.

ICF vice president Thomas Konietzko praised the athletes and the broader SUP community for supporting the world championships.

"Understandably, there was considerable trepidation among the SUP community ahead of our world championships, especially after we were forced to cancel last year's event at the last minute because of court action launched against us," Mr Konietzko said.

"But that action only made us more determined to put on an even bigger and better event this year, and we thank all the athletes for keeping faith with us and making our championships such a memorable experience."

“

DESPITE SOME CHALLENGES, IN THE END WE BELIEVE WE WERE ABLE TO DELIVER A PRODUCT WE ARE VERY PROUD OF. THE POSITIVE REACTIONS ONLINE, AND THE RESPONSES OF THE ATHLETES AT THE EVENT WHO WERE THE FOCUS OF ALL THE ACTIVITIES, HAVE BEEN VERY GRATIFYING.”

“

IT'S NICE TO DISCOVER THIS FORMAT, AND IT'S AN EVEN BIGGER SURPRISE TO WIN IT. I WAS SO HAPPY TO MAKE THE FINAL, I COULD SEE THAT I WASN'T WEAK. IT'S SO GOOD TO HAVE THE SURPRISE OF THE WIN.

"Despite some challenges, in the end we believe we were able to deliver a product we are very proud of. The positive reactions online, and the responses of the athletes at the event who were the focus of all the activities, have been very gratifying."

Mr Konietzko said three countries have already expressed an interest in hosting next year's ICF SUP world championships, and negotiations with a potential 2021 host are also well advanced.

He said the ICF will continue to work to support the growth of SUP around the globe.

"The success of the Qingdao world championships has been a major step in the growth of SUP around the world," he said.

"With 28 participants from 14 countries in a development camp the ICF welcomed a lot of new countries who want to learn and improve their SUP activities. There were also 21 new international technical officials who passed an exam and can now share their experiences with national stakeholders."

"We have had some fantastic feedback from athletes, officials and organisers about how we can make our next event even better, and we will work to achieve this through a process of consultation with the inclusion of the world's top athletes over the coming months."

There was widespread praise for the efforts of ICF SUP committee chair, Rami Zur, his entire committee and the commitment and contribution of the Chinese Canoe Association and the Qingdao organising committee for their role in the success of the championships.

France's Olivia Piana completed an incredible weekend of paddling by winning two gold medals, American Connor Baxter set a new world record in SUP sprint, Australian pair Michael Booth and Lincoln Dews both showed their class while Germany's Sonni Honscheid showed there is no substitute for experience at the top level.



CLICK HERE TO SEE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LONG DISTANCE RACES



Piana followed up her silver medal in the long race and a surprise gold in the sprint with an impressive win in the women's technical race on the final day of competition. She took the lead early and stretched the margin the longer the race went on, confirming her status as the paddler of the world championships.

"This morning I woke up and I felt so tired after my win yesterday, and I slept only five hours last night," Piana said. "I was surprised again to fly around the water, I was like 'wow, what's happened today.' It's an historic event and I am so happy to be a part of it."

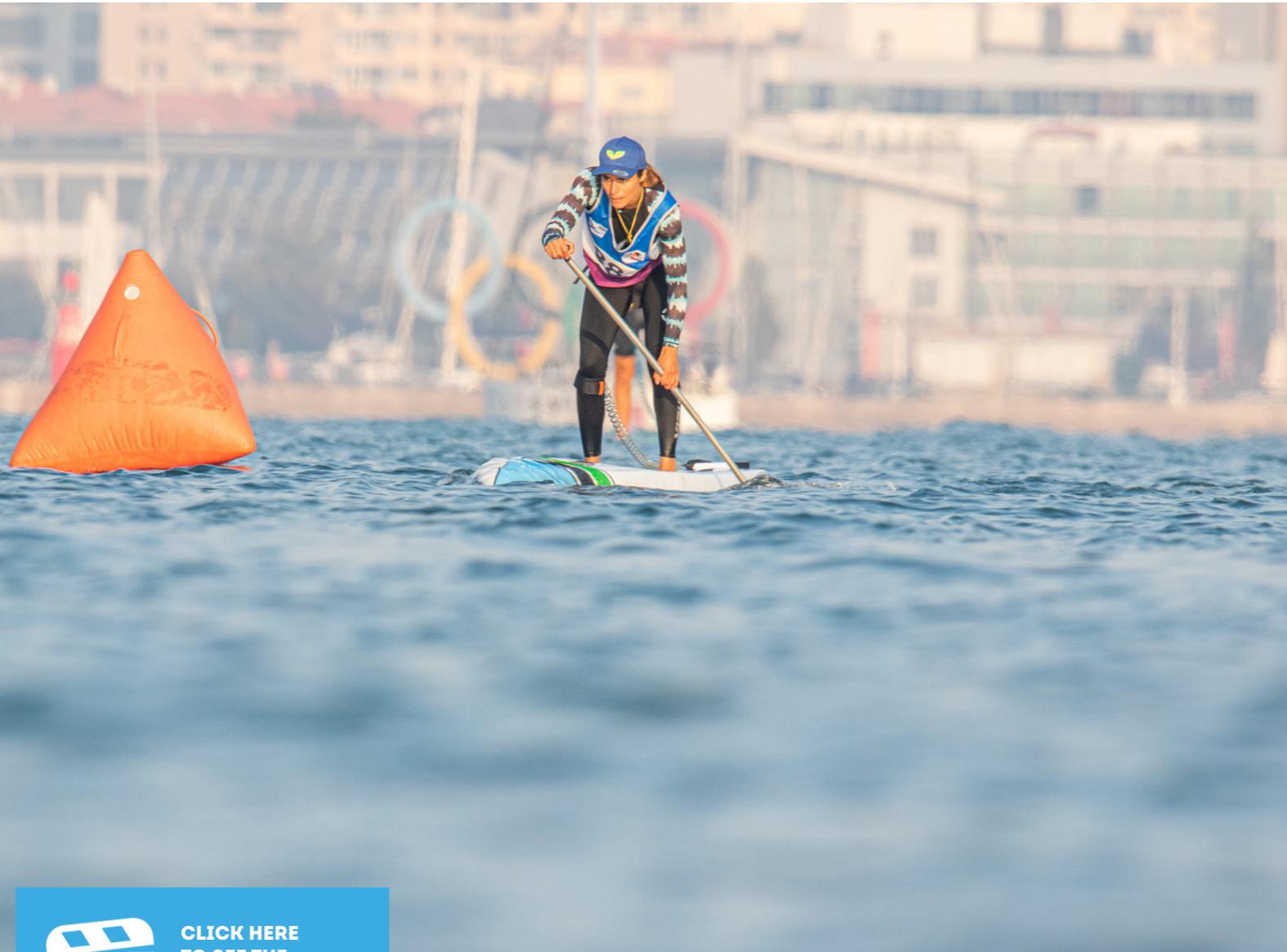
Her win in the sprint 24 hours earlier was the big head-turner. Even Piana was shocked, not because of her time, which was bullet-train fast, but because she considered herself a novice.

"It's the biggest surprise because I have never done a sprint race before, this was the first one of my life," Piana said.

"It's nice to discover this format, and it's an even bigger surprise to win it. I was so happy to make the final, I could see that I wasn't weak. It's so good to have the surprise of the win."

"I never did it before because I thought it was a bit boring. But now I think wow!" Piana showed no ill effects from a grueling long race on Friday, when she battled hard to win silver behind Germany's Sonni Honscheid.

"This is strange, but I feel that I am sometimes stronger when I race the day before," she said.



Olivia Piana (France)



Fiona Wylde (USA)

"All the girls had raced the distance and were racing again, but I have this feeling that when I race and then race again, I feel pretty good. I just enjoyed the moment and did my best."

Honscheid's long distance win came in brutal race conditions on the opening day of the world championships, with almost half the field unable to finish. But the turbulent ocean suited the German, who found herself leading for most of the race.

Only France's Piana was able to hold on to the German, but when Honscheid popped the question on the final lap, the Frenchwoman was unable to match the challenge.

"I still can't believe it, I think it has to sink in still, I feel like I'm floating in the clouds," Honscheid said.

"It was a great race, I had a lot of fun, I felt strong all the way. I was looking back quite a few times, because anything can still happen, even in the last few metres of a race you still can make a mistake. I almost fell

one time, so I really just had to focus on myself."

"Just coming here to Qingdao, and paddling in this place, there is a very special energy. I really enjoy paddling on the open ocean. I'm not the sort of person who likes to race in small places. I still love it as much as the first day I started." Piana finished a clear second, with USA's Fiona Wylde picking up the bronze medal.

Australia's Michael Booth also looked at home in the rough ocean conditions, but he had to work hard to claim the first ever ICF SUP world title.

Booth arrived in Qingdao with a long list of SUP titles to his name, and looked to put his stamp on the ICF long distance race from the start. But it took him well into the final circuit of the three-lap race to see off the challenge of Hungary's Hasulyo brothers, Bruno and Daniel.

"It's awesome to be able to call yourself a world champion, and to be the first ever ICF world champion is pretty special. No-one will be able to take that away from me," Booth said.



"I had a really good race, I just stayed in there, I didn't lead too much, but led enough to be still pulling enough to see what the guys were doing."

"Daniel and Bruno raced absolutely fantastic, and I had to throw my dice right at the end there and I just got away. But I knew if I made just one mistake, Bruno would have got me."

"I nearly had a fall right there at the end, and that would have been it. You want these moments, you want to win, and I'm just really happy to have got it done on the day."

Bruno Hasulyo finished second, 13 seconds behind Booth, with brother Daniel a further 20 seconds back in third.

American Connor Baxter is something of a SUP journeyman, competing in all corners of the globe in a sport he feels passionately about. In Qingdao he was rewarded with the fastest ever time recorded for a men's 200 metre race.

Baxter shocked even himself with his speed in the semi-final, officially stopping the clock at an incredible 46.38 seconds – the first athlete to ever go under the 47 second mark.

"It felt fast, for sure," Baxter said.

"The boys and all of us were pushing hard. I felt my arms cramping and I felt the speed was going good, but to say 46? No I did not think I was going that fast. To beat that today, it's not just a great accomplishment, but to end up in first place."

"To win like this today is an amazing feeling, I'm really stoked."

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TODAY WAS A GOOD EXAMPLE. I WAS EITHER GOING TO DIE, OR WIN. IT HURTS A LITTLE BIT LESS WHEN YOU COME ACROSS THE LINE FIRST, BUT IT WAS A VERY TOUGH RACE AND A VERY TOUGH WEEKEND.

Italy's Claudio Nika and Brazil's Arthur Santacreu both posted times that would have won them gold on nearly any other day this year, but instead had to settle for silver and bronze behind the blonde bazooka from America.

"These races are intense," Baxter said.

"Those short bursts, where it's long burners and feel so bad in the moment. Like my trainer always says, if you're not feeling like you're about to throw up, you're not going hard enough."

24 hours later Baxter was in the water again, hoping to repeat his heroics in the men's technical race. And he almost did – except he ran into a very determined and focussed Australian, Lincoln Dews.

Dews bounced back from a disappointing start to the ICF world championships with a gutsy win in the technical final. Dews led from the start, with 200 metre sprint world champion Connor Baxter pushing him all the way.

He said he felt strong enough throughout the race to lead all the way.



"When I race I like to wear my heart on my sleeve and I want to race in the front," Dews said.

"Today was a good example. I was either going to die, or win. It hurts a little bit less when you come across the line first, but it was a very tough race and a very tough weekend."

"I had a pretty average form coming into today. My distance race was pretty average, so I knew I just needed to get out there and find my own water, and get my rhythm again. But even my heats and semi-finals, I started to feel better but I wasn't 100 per cent."

"But I think I got out there this afternoon and get everything right, and everything started to click."

USA's Baxter finished second, with fellow Australian Ty Judson taking third position.



CLICK HERE TO SEE THE SPRINT RACES HIGHLIGHTS

RESULTS

[Click here to find out full results](#)

Sprint Open Women

1.	PIANA Olivia (FRA)	00:58.62
2.	SOUZA Jessika (BRA)	00:59.17
3.	KING Tarryn (RSA)	00:59.84

Sprint Open Men

1.	BAXTER Connor (USA)	00:46.38
2.	NIKA Claudio (ITA)	00:47.26
3.	SANTACREU Arthur (BRA)	00:48.79

Junior Men Sprint

1.	KOMATSUYAMA Kei (JPN)	00:52.58
2.	TAGUCHI Rai (JPN)	00:52.91
3.	YE Guitong (CHN)	00:54.67

Junior Women Sprint

1.	KRAH Hannah (GER)	01:01.00
2.	LAI Shujing (CHN)	01:01.65
3.	XU Haotong (CHN)	01:02.21

Long Distance Junior Men

1.	TAGUCHI Rai (JPN)	01:07:29.47
2.	KOMATSUYAMA Kei (JPN)	01:07:41.64
3.	SEYMORE Jack (CAN)	01:08:21.73

Technical Open Women

1.	PIANA Olivia (FRA)	00:34.45.25
2.	MOLINERO Susak (ESP)	00:35.28.41
3.	WYLDE Fiona (USA)	00:35.54.63

Technical Open Men

1.	DEWS Lincoln (AUS)	00:30:00.61
2.	BAXTER Connor (USA)	00:30:05.19
3.	JUDSON Ty (AUS)	00:30:13.41

Long Distance Open Men

1.	BOOTH Michael (AUS)	01:37:23.72
2.	HASULYO Bruno (HUN)	01:37:37.22
3.	HASULYO Daniel (HUN)	01:37:57.18

Long Distance Open Women

1.	HONSCHEID Sonja (GER)	01:53:33.03
2.	PIANA Olivia (FRA)	01:54:39.62
3.	WYLDE Fiona (USA)	01:57:05.95

Long Distance Junior Women

1.	KOGAI Mai (JPN)	01:17:24.20
2.	ORAMS Brianna (NZL)	01:17:24.86
3.	LAI Shujing (CHN)	01:21:41.95

PARACANOE

World Championships



FACTS & FIGURES

Location:
Szeged,
Hungary

Statistics:
174 athletes took part
42 countries entered

WikiPaddle:
[Paracanoe 101](#)
Click here to find out

14 different countries won medals
Athletes from four continents won medals

PARACANOE LAYS CLAIM AS ICF'S FASTEST GROWING DISCIPLINE

NEW EVENTS AND NEW ATHLETES UNDERLINE PARACANOE GROWTH

When the history of paracanoe is written, there will be a handful of athletes who will figure prominently in the copy.

At the top of that list will be Ukraine's Serhii Yemelianov and Australia's Curtis McGrath, both gold medalists when paracanoe made its Paralympic debut in Rio in 2016, and both dominating their categories for years after. It was much easier to sit at the top of the tree in the early days of paracanoe. Only a handful of countries had well-developed programs for the sport, and most of the athletes were still learning their trade.

In 2020 expect a major changing of the guard in paracanoe. Of the 2016 gold medalists, only McGrath and Yemelianov can truly claim they are still the best.

Athletes who were fringe players in 2016 have improved dramatically, and a long, long list of athletes from other Paralympic sports have seen the light, and made the move to the water.

As Yemelianov noted after winning his third KL3 world title in Szeged this year, it's getting harder.

"This was a very hard world championships. I've been training every day, and I have a dream to win the world title ten times," Yemelianov said.

"But I have to keep working harder, because every year athletes are getting faster."

McGrath rarely loses, but lately he has been finding ways to win by just the slightest of margins. In Tokyo he will be hoping to

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THIS WAS A VERY HARD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, I'VE BEEN TRAINING EVERY DAY, AND I HAVE A DREAM TO WIN THE WORLD TITLE TEN TIMES

become the first paracanoe athlete to win two gold medals at a single Games, when he competes in the new VL3.

But the rest of the world is catching the big Australian, and fast. In Szeged he successfully defended both his KL2 and VL3 world titles, but there was nothing easy about it. He actually thought he'd been tipped out by Brazil's Caio Carvalho in the VL3, before eventually getting the nod by 0.10 of a second.

"That's the closest I've ever had, so it's nice to be pushed all the way," McGrath said.

"Caio's always been there. Some days he gets a really good start, and some days he just doesn't have the right go, but today was one of those days and he pushed me all the way."

It was a similar story in the KL2, where McGrath had to chase down Italy's Federico Mancarella. It was a frenetic finish, and a clearly relieved Australian who eventually got the nod.

"This is probably the most nervous I have ever been, I think because the field is getting closer and the competition is heating up," McGrath said.

"I need to work on my mental side of things, focusing on and zeroing in on what I can do. A win is a win, but there are always things to improve on."

To be fair to McGrath, he will be much better prepared by the time he hits the water in Tokyo than he has been at anytime since Rio. There have been any number of distractions for McGrath since he made headlines in Rio, and basically he is always too nice to say no, no matter what the request.

McGrath was made the face of the Prince Harry's Invictus Games in Sydney, and took time out this year to get married. The story of his journey from stepping on a landmine in Afghanistan to gold medal podium, coupled with his easy-going nature and winning smile, has proved hard to resist.

Great Britain's Emma Wiggs was one of the stars in Rio, taking the first ever KL2 gold. Four years earlier she had captained her country's sitting volleyball team at London 2012. Like McGrath and Yemelianov, she became a very popular face of paracanoe.

But the arrival of Paralympic swimmer Charlotte Henshaw on to the Great Britain team has made life interesting for Wiggs. In 2017 Wiggs finished ahead of her teammate, but in 2018, and then again this year, Henshaw emerged victorious.

It was an emotional two years for Wiggs. A painful wrist injury which refused to heal made it almost impossible on some days for the Brit to even get on the water. But at the same time she won two world titles in the new Paralympic VL2 event.

Wiggs might not defend her KL2 gold in Tokyo, but if fit, will start favourite in the VL2. Tears flowed freely when she won her gold in Szeged. Months earlier, she had to be talked out of retirement.

"It's just been quite a tough year, I'm really pleased for Matt (her coach) because I've been a really difficult athlete this year, and he's stuck by me, and so's my wife and my family, because I've been hard to live," Wiggs said.

"I always said if I couldn't get faster I'd retire, and I just haven't felt competitive. I've just been on the verge of thinking I'm too old for this, but Matt still believes, and my family still believes, so I just want to make them proud." Meanwhile Henshaw has gone from strength to strength.



Katarzyna Kozikowska
(Poland)

[View athlete bio](#)



She took a while to learn the craft, having spent most of her previous life in the water rather than on top of it, but now looks very comfortable in a big-race environment. "In any sport you can never take anything for granted, and I certainly can't take anything for granted when I line up alongside Emma," Henshaw said.

"I think that's what is amazing about our partnership, our rivalry if you want, that every time we race we are pushing the event forward. Again we have two Brits at the top of the podium, which is always a good day at the office."

"Last year was such a surprise to me. I'm still relatively new to the sport, and I still feel like I've got some improvement to make. I'm not a perfect paddler, and I hope I never am because that means there is nothing else to find."

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THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST NERVOUS I HAVE EVER BEEN, I THINK BECAUSE THE FIELD IS GETTING CLOSER AND THE COMPETITION IS HEATING UP.”

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I'M NOT A PERFECT PADDLER, AND I HOPE I NEVER AM BECAUSE THAT MEANS THERE IS NOTHING ELSE TO FIND.”

In 2016 Great Britain and Australia were the paracanoe powerhouses. In 2020 Ukraine is likely to lay claim to supremacy, with Maryna Mazhula a red-hot prospect to join Serhii Yemelianov as a Paralympic champion.

“I wanted to win, and I wanted to make sure we can go to Tokyo next year,” the Brazilian said.

“Now I will have to train really hard for next year.”

Uzbekistan's Shakhnoza Mirzaeva took the gold in the women's KL3, and in doing so she hopes she's booked a place for herself at next year's Paralympic Games.



“This was my target and I worked very hard for this,” Mirzaeva said.

“I have trained every day for three years, so it was hard work. This is very important for me, and I am so glad that I have got

the opportunity to go. I will work hard to make sure our flag is the highest.”

Great Britain's Laura Sugar took the silver, while Iran's Shahla Behrouzirad made history for her country by taking the bronze medal.

“This is the first time in the history of canoeing in Iran that a women can win a medal at a world championships, in both sprint and para,” Behrouzirad said.

“The whole canoeing family is going to be very happy when they hear about this medal. It is every athlete's dream to take part in the Paralympics, and I was in Rio. I am glad to now have the chance to go to my second Games.”

NEW NAMES AND NEW NATIONS BOOK TICKETS FOR TOKYO 2020

NEW EVENTS PRESENT NEW OPPORTUNITIES

23 nations have earned qualification for next year's Tokyo Paralympics following the ICF paracanoe world championships in Szeged, with more places still to be filled.

Thirteen nations from Europe, four each from Asia and the Americas, and two from Oceania have all booked their tickets for next year off the back of their performances in Hungary. Last month's world championships was the biggest on record, with 176 entries from 42 countries.

Paracanoe powerhouse Great Britain dominates the list, with quotas for seven events. Competitors like Australia's Curtis McGrath who doubled up in Szeged were permitted to only qualify one spot for Tokyo, but will be able to compete in both events at the Games.

Nations will be permitted to have up to two athletes in each event at the Paralympics.

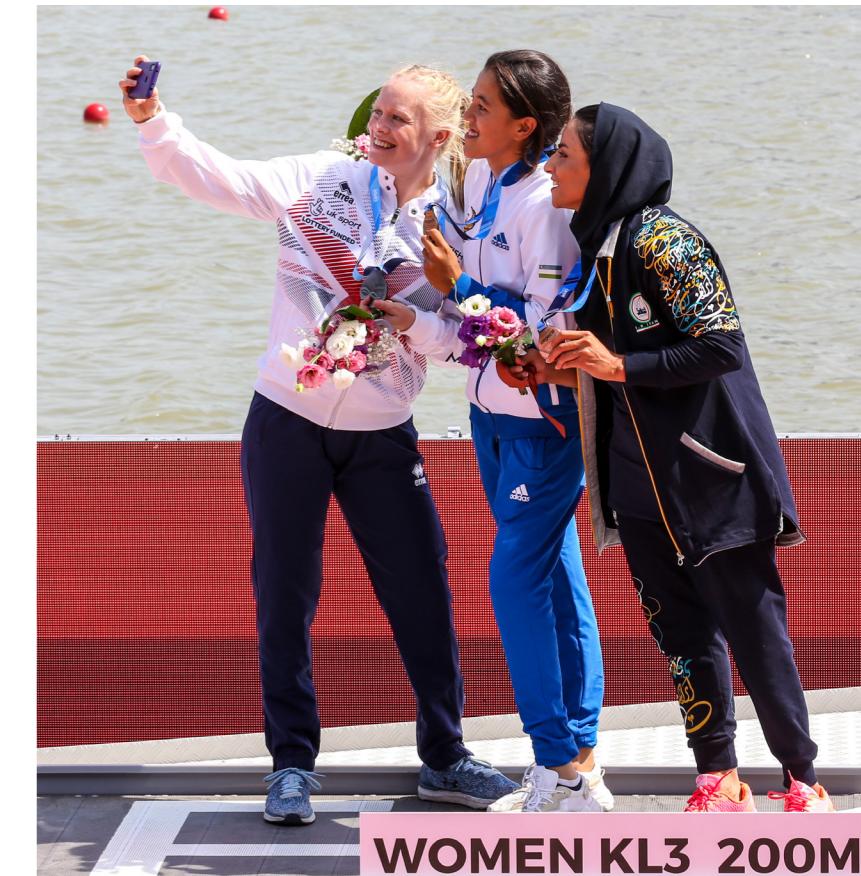
“It's very exciting to see the growth in our sport since paracanoe made its Paralympic debut in Rio in 2016,” chair of the ICF's paracanoe committee, John Edwards, said.

“The addition of three new medal events in Tokyo has been an exciting development, opening the door for many more athletes to get the chance to experience the very best international competition.

“In Tokyo we will see many of the stars of Rio return, and we will also unveil new heroes, athletes who will inspire a whole new generation of potential paralympians.”

Russia has earned five quotas, while Australia, Ukraine, Germany and Brazil, consistently strong paracanoe performers, have each qualified four quotas for Tokyo.

And Japan's Monika Seryu has guaranteed the host nation will have reason to cheer, after qualifying in the women's KL1.



WOMEN KL3 200M

In total 54 quotas have now been allocated for next year, six for each of the nine events on the paracanoe program. New Zealand and Portugal are set to make their Paralympics debut in canoe.

So far countries have qualified boats for next year's Paralympics. Each team will now determine which athletes will fill those quotas.

Next year an additional 36 Paralympic quotas will be allocated at the ICF paracanoe world championships in Duisburg.

TALENT CAMPS UNVEIL PARACANOE STARS OF THE FUTURE

CAMPS HOPE TO UNEARTH FUTURE PARALYMPIANS

The International Canoe Federation's first talent identification camp for paracanoe athletes was labelled a tremendous success, and led to an even bigger camp later in the year.

Seven athletes and two coaches from as far afield as Chile, Egypt and India took part in the paracanoe camp in Budapest, Hungary, ahead of the first ICF Paracanoe and Canoe Sprint World Cup in Poznan, Poland.

The chair of the ICF's paracanoe committee, John Edwards, said the camp underlines the growth of paracanoe around the world.

"This is our first dedicated paracanoe talent ID camp for the ICF, and Egypt and Colombia are being welcomed at the ICF competition level for the first time," Mr Edwards said.

"USA, India and Chile are expanding their teams through this project, and we are now preparing for a larger TIP Camp in August at the world championships."

One of the key objectives of the camp is to increase the number of athletes competing in the women's VL2 category, which will make its Paralympic debut in Tokyo next year.

Three of the paddlers taking part in Budapest this week are set to be classified, with all seven athletes competing in the Poznan world cup.

The camp was run by Jean Christophe Gonneaud, who said that after getting over

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THE STRONG DESIRE OF PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE ATHLETES IS INSPIRING. THEY ALL WANT TO DO THEIR BEST AND IT'S A PLEASURE AS A COACH TO WORK IN SUCH CONDITIONS."



initial translation issues, he has been struck by the dedication and determination of each of the athletes.

"The strong desire of personal improvement of the athletes is inspiring," he said.

"They all want to do their best and it's a pleasure as a coach to work in such conditions. Each day the athletes had the opportunity to see other athletes from the Hungarian paracanoe team and sometimes train together, and also meet on the water or during lunch time some of the best international canoe sprint experts."

"They had the chance to share the Duna River everyday

with a multitude of young paddlers paddling with a communicative enthusiasm on all kind of boats."

Athletes from Nigeria and Armenia, who had delays to their visa process, joined the rest of the squad in the world cup in Poznan. It was the first time athletes from Egypt, Colombia, Nigeria and South Korea competed in a paracanoe world cup.

The focus for those running the TIP camp during the world cup was to observe how the athletes dealt with a competition environment. Time management, conserving energy and the classification system were all important.



For the athletes the TIP camp was an eye-opening experience.

"I didn't know what to expect in Budapest when we practiced 100 metres. I felt like some runs were better than others," USA's Kaitlyn Verfuerth said.

"All I can hope is that I can improve on my past times and try my best. I felt like I learned a lot from this camp and I hope to be able to use what I learn next week and when I go home to train."

For Chile's Jocelyn Munoz it was all about overcoming physical hurdles.

"I have constant pain in the back, which makes it difficult to maintain the abdominal balance, because

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I KNOW THAT WITH THE RIGHT TRAINING AND WITH MORE EXPERIENCE I COULD BE A GOOD CANOE PADDLER.

I don't have trunk control so it is difficult to maintain the canoe to the right," she said.

"I know that with the right training and with more experience I could be a good canoe paddler."

Colombia's Jorge Moreno was thrilled just to be at the camp.

"I learnt a lot and improved thanks to the support and collaboration of Jean-Christophe, the leader of this TIP camp," he said.

"It was like a dream to be in Budapest. I would like to thank the Hungarian Federation, and especially the International Canoe Federation (ICF) which made it possible for me

to fulfil this dream to come here and participate in this camp."

India's Prachi Yadav and Devidas Mahadev Patil are used to paddling in very hot conditions, on waterways that can be quite environmentally challenging.

Budapest was a big change.

"In this camp I loved paddling in a clean river. I've never paddled when it's so cold but now it's a good experience," Prachi said.

"I appreciate the practice given by the best coach of the world."

"In India we paddle with a temperature of 45 degrees," Devidas said.

"Here, even if the weather is cold, its good conditions. I appreciate the water being so clean."

RESULTS

[Click here to find out full results](#)

Men's KL1

1.	KISS Peter Pal (HUN)	45.42
2.	FARIAS Esteban (ITA)	46.17
3.	Da SILVA Luis Cardoso (BRA)	46.49

Men's KL2

1.	MCGRATH Curtis (AUS)	42.35
2.	MANCARELLA Federico (ITA)	42.80
3.	MARTLEW Scott (NZL)	43.51

Men's KL3

1.	YEMELIANOV Serhii (UKR)	40.03
2.	KRYLOV Leonid (RUS)	40.56
3.	CARVALHO Caio Riberio (BRA)	40.70

Men's VL2

1.	Da SILVA Luis Cardoso (BRA)	51.68
2.	MOURAO Norberto (POR)	52.82
3.	TOKARZ Jakub (POL)	53.21

Men's VL3

1.	MCGRATH Curtis (AUS)	47.42
2.	CARVALHO Caio (BRA)	47.52
3.	WOOD Stuart (GBR)	48.42

Women's KL1

1.	MAZHULA Maryna (UKR)	55.99
2.	MULLER Edina (GER)	56.97
3.	WOLLERMANN Katherine (CHI)	58.03

Women's KL2

1.	HENSHAW Charlotte (GBR)	47.62
2.	WIGGS Emma (GBR)	49.03
3.	SEIPEL Susan (AUS)	51.12

Women's KL3

1.	MIRZAEVA Shakhnoza (UZB)	47.29
2.	SUGAR Laura (GBR)	47.32
3.	BEHROUZIRAD Shahla (IRI)	48.96

Women's VL2

1.	WIGGS Emma (GBR)	56.10
2.	SEIPEL Susan (AUS)	57.74
3.	NIKIFOROVA Maria (RUS)	59.24

CANOE SUSTAINABILITY



[CLICK HERE TO SEE ATHLETES VIEWS ON SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ICF'S INITIATIVES AT 2019 EVENTS](#)

FACTS & FIGURES



Statistics:

More than 1300 athletes surveyed
More than 80 per cent of waste recycled
More than 60 nations involved
More than 2000 reusable bottles distributed

WikiPaddle:
[Sustainability 101](#)
Click here to find out

ICF CONTINUES TO WORK TOWARDS SMALLER ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

PLANS TO EXTEND PROGRAMMES IN COMING SEASONS

The International Canoe Federation has praised the hosts of two environmental sustainability projects it oversaw during the 2019 season, and believes the foundations have been laid to further extend the program in the future.

La Seu, in Spain, and Pitesti, Romania, hosted pilot projects alongside the major international canoeing events they hosted in 2019. La Seu was home to the ICF canoe slalom world championships, while Pitesti was the location for the ICF U23 and junior canoe sprint world titles.

In La Seu, the canoe slalom venue for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, the hosts introduced 30 sustainability initiatives during the five-day world championships. They covered areas including food and water, local economy, waste management and social awareness.

"The La Seu organising committee went above and beyond what we had expected from them during the 2019 world championships," ICF sustainability manager, Catherine Wieser, said.

"They've set a fantastic benchmark for future events, achieving figures which they should be incredibly proud of. We were all inspired by their passion and their vision."

During the event 81 per cent of all generated waste was recycled, far exceeding the pre-event target of 70 per cent. All of the food served was prepared fresh to avoid paper and plastic wrapping, and surplus bread and cooked food was donated to local associations.

Organisers also installed water fountains around the venue to allow everyone to re-fill their reusable bottles.

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THEY'VE SET A FANTASTIC BENCHMARK FOR FUTURE EVENTS, ACHIEVING FIGURES WHICH THEY SHOULD BE INCREDIBLY PROUD OF. WE WERE ALL INSPIRED BY THEIR PASSION AND THEIR VISION.

Pitesti in Romania embraced the challenges set by the ICF to make its canoe sprint event as environmentally sustainable as possible, and found an enthusiastic audience of young paddlers from around the world.

"As we all know, today's youth are very concerned about issues surrounding the environment and sustainability, so it was no surprise to see them embracing initiatives in Pitesti to lower the event's footprint," Ms Wieser said.



CLICK HERE TO
SEE HOW THE
ICF'S FIGHT TO
REDUCE PLASTIC
AT EVENTS

"We hosted a workshop with Pitesti in April, which was attended by the local Mayor, athletes, and members of the host organising committee.

"It was also important for us to be able to tap into our younger members of the canoeing community, who tend to be very environmentally aware. The feedback was very positive and we are confident we have built a platform for events for the future."

Among the highlights of the Pitesti program was the use of locally sourced produce and products, water re-filling stations around the course to encourage less use of plastic bottles, and using re-usable glasses in areas like the VIP room.

During competition, more than 1000 lunches were served to athletes each day, all on re-usable plates and using re-usable cutlery. Vegetarian food was available, which was widely appreciated by spectators who were surveyed by ICF staff.

To eliminate unnecessary printing, a local vendor was engaged to work at the course to print shirts, banners, signage and souvenirs. The printing was provided on demand, reducing costs and transport for organisers.

"During the event we carried out more than 150 surveys, targeting athletes, volunteers and spectators," Geert Hendriks, head of projects at AISTS, said.

"We wanted to hear their thoughts on how we could make events more environmentally sustainable, what feelings they had about the work we were doing in Pitesti, and how important they considered it to be."

"We will collate all the results over the coming days, but the initial response was incredibly positive. We are very grateful for the work carried out by the Romanian Federation to make this pilot project such a success."

An environmental sustainability toolkit will be developed by the ICF, based on the results of the three pilot events. The toolkit will be distributed to all national federations, and will be part of future seminars outlining the responsibilities of host organising committees.

In an average calendar year the ICF hosts at least 15 major events across all its disciplines, and is determined to continue its role as a world leader in presenting environmentally sustainable sporting events.

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**PITESTI WAS
THE FIRST TIME
WE TESTED OUR
SUSTAINABILITY
PROGRAM AT A
CANOE SPRINT
EVENT, AND WE
WERE ABSOLUTELY
THRILLED WITH
THE RESULTS.**

"When you couple the enthusiasm of the athletes with the willingness of an event organizer, the planet will emerge the winner, and this was certainly the case in Pitesti."

Like La Seu, Pitesti organisers prepared all food fresh to eliminate unnecessary packaging. There was a strong and positive response to education initiatives during the championships, and plenty of exciting ideas put forward for future events.

"The idea of pilot projects is to test the water, to see what is possible and what isn't, so that we can go to future events with a plan that we know is achievable," Ms Wieser said.

"Because of the excellent work of our hosts in La Seu and Pitesti, we now have a much

better idea of what can be done. It gives us great confidence that in the future, all ICF events will be considered environmentally sustainable."

The ICF sustainability projects in 2019 followed on from similar projects in Augsburg, Germany, in 2018.

"To make these pilot events work, we need to involve organisers, athletes, volunteers and spectators to ensure the message is being delivered," Ms Wieser, said.

"Pitesti was the first time we tested our sustainability program at a canoe sprint event, and we were absolutely thrilled with the results."

"We were excited when the Romanian Canoe Federation expressed a desire to host this pilot project, and were impressed by their level of enthusiasm before and during the event."





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EXTREME SLALOM

World Championships

FACTS & FIGURES

Location:
Prague,
Czech Republic

Statistics:
31 nations took part
72 competitors entered
4 nations shared the medals

WikiPaddle:
[Extreme Slalom 101](#)
Click here to find out



MORE ATHLETES STEP UP TO TAKE THE EXTREME CANOE SLALOM

EXCITING FORMAT DRAWS IN NEW FANS

The future of extreme canoe slalom looks secure after another solid season of growth, culminating in a stand-alone world championships in Prague which showcased the discipline at its very best.

Since its introduction in 2016 extreme slalom has gone from strength to strength, attracting new athletes and new fans every season. The format, which involves competitors going head-to-head down a slalom course, has proved especially popular with younger canoeing fans.

Athletes begin the race by sliding off a platform, and then it's a frenetic race to the finish line. The competitors need to negotiate buoys on the way down the course, and there is often physical contact between the boats.

Adding further to the intrigue, the athletes need to complete a compulsory eskimo roll. There are plenty of sections during the race where the gold can be won or lost.

The Czech Republic's Veronika Vojtova and Germany's Stefan Hengst reigned supreme in 2019, both overcoming previous world champions to win gold.

Vojtova found herself up against 2017 world champion, Caroline Trompeter of Germany, and 2019 overall leader, American Ashley Nee, but kept her composure in front of a passionate home crowd to grab the gold.



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THE ICF IS HOPING THE EXCITEMENT AND CONTINUED GROWTH IN VIEWING NUMBERS AND PARTICIPATION RATES WILL CATCH THE ATTENTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

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YOU CAN HAVE A RACE PLAN, BUT IT WILL NOT WORK. YOU HAVE TO REACT, AND SEE WHAT THE OTHERS WILL DO, AND HOPE THAT YOU REACT RIGHT AND GO FOR THE RIGHT LINE. SOMETIMES IT GOES GOOD FOR YOU.

"It was a perfect day for me, because I managed to win at home," Vojtova said.

"My slalom run was not good before all the local fans, but now I am a world champion in slalom cross. What a super day."

"My last run was in Rio last year. I had many plans, but this is slalom cross, it's a crazy time. My start was not good in the final, so I just had to wait for my time."

Vojtova beat Russia's Polina Mukhgaleeva, with Trompeter picking up the bronze.



Hengst also had a tough final, which included 2017 world champion and hometown favourite, Vavrinec Hradilek. But the German went out hard early and held on to finish ahead of Russia's Nikita Gubenko and Brazil's Pedro Goncalves.

"I enjoyed today a lot, it's so good to race here in front of the Czech people," he said.

"You can have a race plan, but it will not work. You have to react, and see what the others will do, and hope that you react right and go for the right line. Sometimes it goes good for you."

"I hope we can combine this more in the future, to maybe get it in the Olympics. That would be nice."



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ADDING FURTHER TO THE INTRIGUE, THE ATHLETES NEED TO COMPLETE A COMPULSORY ESKIMO ROLL.



 [CLICK HERE TO GET THE LOW DOWN ON EXTREME SLALOM FROM USA'S SAGE DONNELLY](#)

In the overall extreme slalom world cup standings, American Ashley Nee came out on top in the women's competition, ahead of Caroline Trompeter and Polina Mukhaleeva.

In the men's competition it was Hradilek who took the season title, ahead of Goncalves, with Great Britain's Etienne Chappell third.

The ICF is hoping the excitement and continued growth in viewing numbers and participation rates will catch the attention of the International Olympic Committee. Extreme slalom would require no extra athlete quotas, would use the slalom venue, and would appeal to younger sport fans.

RESULTS

 [Click here to find out full results](#)

Women

- VOJTOVA Veronika (CZE)
- MUKHGALEVA Polina (RUS)
- TROMPETER Caroline (GER)

Men

- HENGST Stefan (GER)
- GUBENKO Nikita (RUS)
- GONCALVES Pedro (BRA)

SLALOM

U23 & JUNIORS

World Championships



FACTS & FIGURES

Location:
Krakow,
Poland

WikiPaddle:
[Canoe Slalom 101](#)
Click here to find out

Statistics:
48 nations took part.
426 athletes competed.

Czech and Poland had most entries – 37 each.
22 world titles were decided.

BIG NAMES FINALLY DELIVER ON THEIR POTENTIAL AT JUNIOR WORLDS

BREAKTHROUGH WINS FOR FUTURE STARS

Every year the U23 and junior canoe slalom world championships provides a window into the future of the sport, a chance to showcase the athletes who will be tasked with safeguarding the sport in years to come.

In Krakow in 2019 the world's best young canoe slalom paddlers showed they are more than ready to take up the cause. And sprinkled among the new names, a handful of athletes who have already taken on, and conquered, the best competitors in the world.

At the head of the queue in Krakow were Czech Amalie Hilgertova and Brazilian Ana Satila, who seem to have been around forever, but finally broke through this year for major wins.

Hilgertova first grabbed the attention of the canoeing world back in 2013 when she won the junior K1 world title. She was 15 at the time, the niece of two-time Olympic champion, Stepanka Hilgertova, and looked destined to become the biggest name in women's canoe slalom sooner rather than later.

But as quick as she arrived on the scene, Hilgertova fell back in the pack. There were occasional Czech team gold medals, but individual glory constantly eluded the youngster.

This year it all turned around. Hilgertova caused a major shock when she kicked the season off with K1 victory at the European championships, followed up with some

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I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR AN UNDER 23 MEDAL FOR A VERY LONG TIME, AND EVERY TIME I LOST IT BECAUSE OF MY HEAD I THINK.

encouraging results at ICF world cups, and then put it all together with a gold-medal performance at the U23 worlds.

"I've been waiting for an under 23 medal for a very long time, and every time I lost it because of my head I think," a relieved Hilgertova said after her win.

"This year I have managed to get it together, and now this happens. I've started to do some focus, mental exercises, and that really helps me. My feeling on the water is much better, I'm more confident, I know what I'm doing, and I manage to be at the right place at the right time."

“

I'M HAPPY WITH MY RACE TODAY, BUT IT'S NOT WHAT I REALLY WANT. I WANT MUCH MORE THAN THIS, AND I'M GOING TO FIGHT FOR THIS TO THE END AND MAKE MY DREAMS COME TRUE.

The Hilgertova story is not unusual. It's a rare young athlete who can live up to early hype, who can deal with the constant pressure of being told they are the best. Australia's Jessica Fox is an exception, but she is Jessica Fox.

For Hilgertova, it took her at least five years to learn how to mentally prepare for an event, to shut out all the noise and the pressure.

"I think after my first big medal in 2013 I had big expectations, not just from others but also from myself," she said. "I created big pressure on myself, and I was always nervous before the races, I couldn't perform well. I think I told myself that I had had enough of this and I really started to work on it."

Hilgertova kept her cool on the challenging Krakow course to post a winning time of 95.22. Polish paddler Klaudia Zwolinska sizzled down the course to post a 95.76, which included a two-second penalty, but the Czech was up to the challenge.

Germany's Selina Jones was ecstatic after finishing third in 98.34, the best result of her career.

Satila was just 15 when she made her Olympic debut in London in 2012, and then carried the hopes of her nation at home in Rio in 2016. London was always going to be a learning experience, and in Rio the Brazilian was considered an outside hope of a medal.

It didn't happen then, but since those Games Satila has shown consistently that she can paddle very fast. But she is also prone to mistakes, and as students of slalom know, there are no small mistakes in the sport.

So it became one of the big questions in canoe slalom – when would Ana Satila get it all together in a major race final and fulfil the promise she had shown so often?

The answer came in Krakow. A fired up Satila, hit with a 50-second penalty 24 hours earlier in the K1, steamed down the C1 course to win the biggest title of her career. But she still wasn't satisfied.

"Not yet. I want much more than this," she said.

"I'm happy with my race today, but it's not what I really want. I want much more than this, and I'm going to fight for this to the end and make my dreams come true."

"I'm so happy for my friends and supporters and for Brazil. I really think I've grown up in this race a lot today."



Pol Oulhen (France)

[View athlete bio](#)



Marta Bertoncelli
(Italy)

[View athlete bio](#)

"I think to paddle at this level, two times, with the Europeans and the world championships, I like it so much to reach this level in the finals," Gestin said.

"I didn't think I was paddling well during the heats and the semi-finals, that was hard for me. But in the final I knew what I had to do, I knew I could go faster."

"Every day with my coach I try and learn new things, and I think next year I could learn even more with the new whitewater centre in Paris."

Gestin may not get to Tokyo next year, but when the Games head to Paris in 2024, he will be right in the mix. Then the pressure will be on.

Gestin finished with a time of 90.39, with French teammate Lucas Roisin second on 91.34. Irishman Liam Jegou took the bronze on 91.97, which included a two-second penalty that put him out of the gold medal position.

There's a lot of depth in French men's canoeing, which bodes well for Paris 2024. In the men's U23 K1 this year just 0.30 of a second split teammates Pal Oulhen and Mathurin Madore.

The final was full of drama, with racing halted because of problems with the water levels, but when racing resumed it was the French duo who handed out the slalom lesson.

Oulhen's 86.02 proved enough to take the gold.

"It was exciting. We had to wait a few minutes, but I think that was good for me. I had a good feeling and I really enjoyed my run," Oulhen said.

"This was my last U23 championship, so I think this was the moment to make a medal. I've never won an U23 medal before, so it's cool for me and a good way to start the senior category.

"I think I was good at the Europeans two weeks ago, I saw that I could go fast, and I really like this course. Maybe at some points it's quite the same as the place where I train. Next year I will train on the new Paris Olympic course, which will be good for me."

Madore finished in 86.32, with former junior world champion Mario Leitner of Austria third in 87.82.

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I DIDN'T THINK I WAS PADDLING WELL DURING THE HEATS AND THE SEMI-FINALS, THAT WAS HARD FOR ME. BUT IN THE FINAL I KNEW WHAT I HAD TO DO, I KNEW I COULD GO FASTER.



Jan Vetrovsky
(Czech Republic)

[View athlete bio](#)



Ana Satila
(Brazil)

[View athlete bio](#)

In juniors racing some very clear stars of the future emerged from the pack, and once again it was a Frenchman who led the way.

For many, the performance of Anatole Delassus was the highlight of the Krakow world championships. The teenage not only won junior K1 gold, he posted a time quicker than the men in the U23 from earlier in the day.

In a high-class final, silver medalist Jakub Krejci also went quicker than the U23's, and thought he had the gold safely in his keeping – until Delassus hit the water.

"It's fantastic, I didn't know the time of Jakub at the start, so I'm so happy," Delassus said.

"I was not in good form at the start of this year, and French team selection was bad for me. But I feel very well now, so I'm very happy."

"This is my last year as a junior. Next year will be the same, just a little bit harder."

The bronze went to Slovenia's Vid Ostrbenk in a time of 89.61.

Czech Gabriella Satkova has been earmarked as a star of the future for some time, and underlined just why in Krakow with a successful defence of her junior C1 title. It wasn't just that she won, it was also that she was able to stand tall while most of the fliers cracked under pressure.



Klaudia Zwolinska
(Poland)

[View athlete bio](#)

Satkova, who has also made her mark as an outstanding wildwater paddler, eventually finished 2.58 seconds ahead of teammate Tereza Kneblová to end her junior career on a high.

"I knew it was going to be harder than last year because of the pressure, but I really just hoped to do my best," Satkova said.

"It's the hardest thing in the world for me, to not be stressed and to be focussed. You never know if you're going to be fast enough, I was so nervous, I didn't know if I could do it again."

"Next year will be so hard for me, because all the girls are so strong and it's so hard to beat them."

Italy's Marta Bertoncelli picked up the bronze medal.

Another who will relish the chance to race against older opponents next year will be Czech Antonie Galuskova, who finished her career as a junior paddler by winning back her world title in Krakow.

But it almost didn't happen. A less-than-impressive semi-final saw her only just scrape into the final, and after winning the world title in 2017, and then missing the podium in 2018, she feared the worst.

"I think last year was good for me," she said.

"Maybe it was a little bit painful at first, but I got over it and I knew it would help me in the future. I just wanted to have fun here, but it actually wasn't much fun because I nearly missed the final."

"And in the final I thought with my touch, I would regret it. But it was fast."

Galuskova finished with 100.91, with Slovenia's Eva Alina Hocevar second in 102.00. 15-year-old American Evy Leibfarth continued her dream year with a bronze medal in 102.35. Six seconds of penalties kept Leibfarth off the top of the podium.

After two years of making junior finals with winning a medal, Nejc Polencic broke through to win C1 gold in a time of 98.47, even with four seconds of penalties

"This is my first podium, I'm really happy. I made a few mistakes, but it was enough," he said.

"I had two touches, but when I crossed the line I saw the time and I was happy. I knew after me there were only three paddlers."

"After last season I got a new coach, but I didn't know how fast I was. I didn't make the finals at the European championships. It's amazing to finish my junior career as champion."

Host nation Poland picked up their second silver medal of the day, with Szymon Nowobilski finishing in 99.22, while Frenchman Adrien Fisher took bronze in 99.26.



“

IT'S THE HARDEST THING IN THE WORLD FOR ME, TO NOT BE STRESSED AND TO BE FOCUSED. YOU NEVER KNOW IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE FAST ENOUGH, I WAS SO NERVOUS, I DIDN'T KNOW IF I COULD DO IT AGAIN.



RESULTS

[Click here to find out full results](#)

Men's U23 C1

1.	GESTIN Nicholas (FRA)	90.39 (0)
2.	ROISIN Lucas (FRA)	91.34 (0)
3.	JEGOU Liam (IRL)	91.97 (2)

Women's U23 K1

1.	HILGERTOVA Amalie (CZE)	95.22 (0)
2.	ZWOLINSKA Klaudia (POL)	95.76 (2)
3.	JONES Selina (GER)	98.34 (0)

Men's Junior C1

1.	POLENCIC Nejc (SLO)	98.47 (4)
2.	NOWOBILSKI Szymon (POL)	99.22 (2)
3.	FISCHER Adrien (FRA)	99.26 (2)

Women's Junior K1

1.	GALUSKOVA Antonin (CZE)	100.91 (2)
2.	HOCEVAR Eva Alina (SLO)	102.00 (0)
3.	LEIBFARTH Evy (USA)	102.35 (6)

Women's U23 C1

1.	SATILA Ana (BRA)	101.06 (0)
2.	MINAZOVA Alsu (RUS)	104.45 (4)
3.	SKACHOVA Monika (SVK)	105.95 (3)

Men's U23 K1

1.	OULHEN Pol (FRA)	86.02 (0)
2.	MADORE Mathurin (FRA)	86.32 (0)
3.	LEITNER Mario (FRA)	87.72 (0)

Men's U23 Extreme Slalom

1.	MAIMISTOV Sergey (RUS)
2.	WEGER Matthias (AUT)
3.	KANCLER Tine (SLO)

Men's Junior Extreme Slalom

1.	CHAPPELL Etienne (GBR)
2.	SMIRNOV Egor (RUS)
3.	HEIN Jakob (GER)

Women's U23 Extreme Slalom

1.	SATILA Ana (BRA)
2.	HILGERTOVA Amalie (CZE)
3.	FISEROVA Tereza (CZE)

Women's Junior Extreme Slalom

1.	LEIBFARTH Evy (USA)
2.	OSCHMAUTZ Antonia (AUT)
3.	BEKOVA Katerina (CZE)

Women's Junior C1

1.	SATKOVA Gabriela (CZE)	105.15 (0)
2.	KNEBLOVA Tereza (CZE)	107.73 (0)
3.	BERTONCELLI Marta (ITA)	109.93 (2)

Men's Junior K1

1.	DELAZZUS Anatole (FRA)	85.15 (0)
2.	KREJCI Jakub (CZE)	85.42 (0)
3.	OSTRBENK Vid (SLO)	89.61 (0)

SPRINT U23 & JUNIORS

World Championships

FACTS & FIGURES

Location:
Pitesti,
Romania 

WikiPaddle:
[Canoe Sprint 101](#)
[Click here to find out](#)

Statistics:
63 nations took part.
20 countries shared the medals.
Hungary was the most successful nation with 21 medals, including 10 gold.
The host organisers and ICF ran a successful sustainability pilot programme.

JENSEN THE STAR AS BEST YOUNG SPRINT TALENT SHOW THEIR STYLE

WINNING TREBLE REPEATS SUCCESS OF 2018

The incredible junior canoe sprint career of Canada's Sophia Jensen came to a close in 2019, the teenager picking up another three gold medals to add to her winning treble from 2018, confirming her status as one of the most exciting young paddlers on the planet.

Jensen looks set to follow in the footsteps of her Canadian teammates, Laurence Vincent-Lapointe and Katie Vincent, who have dominated women's canoeing at a senior level since the discipline was first introduced.

Next year Quebec's Jensen will test herself against the best U23 canoe paddlers in the world. It will be a definite step-up in class, but there is no reason to doubt she'll be up to it. In Romania she successfully defended her C1 200 and 500 metre titles, and teamed up with Julia Osende to retain their C2 500 gold.

"I just love what I do, and love going out and doing the best I can," Jensen said after wrapping up her third gold in Pitesti.

"I'm super happy that this has all happened when I'm a junior, so I can learn how to cope with the stress and the nerves, and build on it for the seasons to come."

While Canada dominates women's canoe, there is little doubt who has been the strongest nation overall in women's canoe sprint.

Hungary has been staking a case for decades to be recognised as the world's premiere canoe sprint nation, and with a table-topping ten gold medals at the 2019 ICF U23 and junior canoe sprint world

“

I'M SUPER HAPPY THAT THIS HAS ALL HAPPENED WHEN I'M A JUNIOR, SO I CAN LEARN HOW TO COPE WITH THE STRESS AND THE NERVES, AND BUILD ON IT FOR THE SEASONS TO COME.

championships in Romania, it's unlikely to give up the claim any time soon.

The depth of talent in Hungarian sprint canoeing, especially among its women, can be quite intimidating. The mere presence of the green and white singlet can be enough to bring a bead of sweat to the brow of many athletes.

Hungary's canoe sprint record at an Olympic level is well known – 25 gold medals and 80 medals altogether, putting it alongside Germany as one of the most successful nations ever. For those hoping it is nothing more than a passing phase, the results from Pitesti suggest otherwise.



Daniel Atkins
(United Kingdom)

[View athlete bio](#)

“

**I WATCHED BIG KAYAKERS,
WATCHED THEM PADDLING
FAST WITH STRONG FINISHES.
I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A
SINGLE KAYAKER. MY DREAM
HAS FINALLY COME TRUE, IT'S
A VERY HAPPY DAY FOR ME.**



Ten gold medals found their way back to Hungary – seven for a very strong women's team, and six of the titles went to junior paddlers. Many of the Hungarian athletes will tell you the biggest challenge they face is getting on to their national team.

Most of them will not taste senior team action for several years yet, given the strength of the top squad. But when that door finally opens, they'll be primed to make an immediate impact.

Athletes like Emese Kohalmi, who picked up three gold medals over the four days of competition. She won the junior K1 500, teamed up with

Youth Olympic Games gold medalist Esther Rendessy to win the K2 500, and was part of the junior K4 500 winning combination.

Or Andras Redl, who, like Kohalmi, hails from the small Hungarian town of Vac, and who won gold in the junior K1 1000 and 500.

“This was my dream, from my childhood,” he said.

“I watched big kayakers, watched them paddling fast with strong finishes. I always wanted to be a single kayaker. My dream has finally come true, it's a very happy day for me.”



Artur Guliev
(Uzbekistan)

[View athlete bio](#)



Then there's Karina Biben and Olga Bako, in their first year of U23, and winning the women's K2 500. 12 months earlier they were competing as juniors.

“It's a much harder category, and we felt it during the race,” Bako said.

“In Hungary, qualification is very hard. Sometime the Hungarian qualification can be as hard as a big international event,” Biben said.

Noemi Pupp and Anna Lucz won the women's K1 500 and K1 200 respectively. Pupp had an air of determination about her, after narrowly losing the K1 1000 earlier in the week in a nailbiting finish.

“It was a hard weekend, there was so much pressure on me today because I really wanted to win the Olympic race,” Pupp said.

“I prepared fully for the 500, it was my goal.”

Lucz went into her 200 metre race as the defending world champion, and admitted the pre-race nerves put her on edge.

“I was very nervous, it was quite hard for me to defend my gold medal, but now I'm really happy that I was able to do it,” Lucz said.

“I've been feeling very good on the water, and feeling quite confident.”



Sophia Jensen
(Canada)

[View athlete bio](#)

Julia Lilley Osende
(Canada)

[View athlete bio](#)

Hungary's final gold medal at Pitesti went to Matyas Koleszar and Viktor Nemeth in the men's U23 K2 1000.

“It was a long race, into a headwind,” Nemeth said.

“We felt from the start okay. It was very close at 500, but we felt strong.”

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WINNING A TITLE IS GREAT, BUT I THINK JUST DEFENDING IT, ONLY A FEW PEOPLE HAVE DONE THAT, SO I FEEL QUITE HONoured TO BE AMONG THOSE PEOPLE.

It wasn't just the Hungarians and Canada's Sophia Jensen who were making a big impression at the U23 and junior world championships. Germany's Conrad Scheibner, Australia's Thomas Green, and Cuban sensation Jose Cordova showed their class during a stand-out competition.

Cordova made headlines earlier in the season when, as a 17-year-old, he upstaged a world-class field which included two-time Olympic gold medalist Sebastian Brendel in a C1 1000 world cup race.

It was no surprise that he made pretty easy work of winning the junior C1 1000 title in Pitesti.

Germany's Scheibner has long been in the shadows of illustrious teammates like Brendel, Yul Oeltze and Peter Kretschmer, but given the chance to shine, he grabbed the opportunity with both hands in Romania.

He successfully defended his U23 C1 1000 gold, and then teamed up with Tim Hecker to win the U23 C2 1000 title little more than one hour later.

"I wanted to save some energy for the C2, so I took out my C1 hard and just tried to defend my position," Scheibner said.

"Winning a title is great, but I think just defending it, only a few people have done that, so I feel quite honoured to be among those people."

Australia's Green has been making a big impression in senior canoeing ranks in the past two seasons, and that form held up against his own age group. He led all the way to win a competitive K1 1000 gold, and then was part of the triumphant men's K4 1000 crew.

"It was good fun, but it was also a bit tough," he said.

"I was just trying to keep control of the race, and it seemed to go well."

It was a good week for the Australian men's U23 squad, with K4 crew members Jackson Collins and Jean van der Westhuyzen teaming up to win the men's K2 1000 gold.



RESULTS

[Click here to find out full results](#)

K4 Junior Women

1.	HUNGARY	01:38.070
2.	GERMANY	01:40.160
3.	CANADA	01:41.060

K1 Junior Men 1000

1.	REDL Andras (HUN)	03:43.493
2.	SOBISEK Tomas (CZE)	03:46.526
3.	SANCHEZ Pablo (ESP)	03:46.926

C1 Junior Men 1000

1.	CORDOVA Jose (CUB)	04:06.947
2.	MINARIK Jiri (CZE)	04:11.509
3.	KOEPPEN Florian (GER)	04:12.132

K1 U23 Men 1000

1.	GREEN Thomas (AUS)	03:41.946
2.	THORDSEN Jakob (GER)	03:43.024
3.	VARGA Adam (HUN)	03:43.444

C1 U23 Men 1000

1.	SCHEIBNER Conrad (GER)	04:09.259
2.	DIBA Constantin (ROU)	04:10.699
3.	KODINOV Angel (BUL)	04:11.859

K2 Junior Men 1000

1.	KURTH/HEUSER (GER)	03:31.000
2.	ORY/ERDELYI (HUN)	03:31.925
3.	SERRANO/DEL RIO (ESP)	03:34.398

C2 Junior Men 1000

1.	MALKOV/ROMANOV (RUS)	03:58.072
2.	PALESHKO/SHALAK (BLR)	03:59.952
3.	BAUSCHKE/WESSEL (GER)	04:07.142

C2 U23 Men 1000

1.	HECKER/SCHEIBNER (GER)	03:50.238
2.	CARP/STRAT (ROU)	03:50.641
3.	SHKARNEHA/NAHORHYI (UKR)	03:51.476

K4 U23 Women 500

1.	POLAND	01:37.560
2.	HUNGARY	01:38.738
3.	RUSSIA	01:38.778

C1 Junior Women 200

1.	JENSEN Sophia (CAN)	00:47.593
2.	DUBOYS Yarisleidis (CUB)	00:48.039
3.	LIN Xialian (CHN)	00:49.591

K1 Junior Women 200

1.	LEANIUK Veranika (BLR)	00:41.881
2.	BELLAN Irene (ITA)	00:41.901
3.	RENDESSY Eszter (HUN)	00:42.085

K1 Junior Men 200

1.	ATKINS Daniel (GBR)	00:36.835
2.	MAASSEN Tom (GER)	00:36.897
3.	MARTINEZ Gabriel (ESP)	00:36.907

K2 U23 Men 1000

1.	KOLESZAR/NEMETH (HUN)	03:27.774
2.	VAN DER WESTHUYZEN/COLLINS (AUS)	03:29.139
3.	HILLER/KURSCHAT (GER)	03:29.602

K2 Junior Women 500

1.	KOHALMI/RENDESSY (HUN)	01:54.262
2.	SOBISKOVÁ/GALADOVÁ (CZE)	01:57.295
3.	PASHCHANKA/KALUHINA (BLR)	01:58.985

K2 U23 Women 500

1.	BIBEN/BAKO (HUN)	01:53.962
2.	BAUZA/PELACHS (ESP)	01:54.538
3.	VILKOVA/SKRYHANAVA (BLR)	01:54.664

C2 U23 Women 500

1.	KURACH/KHARCHENKO (RUS)	02:05.266
2.	RAKHMATOVA/ZOKIROVA (UZB)	02:06.044
3.	KISBAN/BRAGATO (HUN)	02:07.206



RESULTS

C1 U23 Women 200		
1.	BOROWSKA Dorota (POL)	00:46.282
2.	KURACH Kseniia (RUS)	00:47.182
3.	NAZDROVA Alena (BLR)	00:47.364
K1 U23 Women 200		
1.	LUCZ Anna (HUN)	00:41.188
2.	KOVNIR Kristina (RUS)	00:41.348
3.	IVERSEN Bolette (DEN)	00:41.866
K1 U23 Men 200		
1.	AKMENS Roberts (LAT)	00:35.060
2.	SEMYKIN Ivan (UKR)	00:35.178
3.	GRABOWSKI Bartosz (POL)	00:35.198
K4 Junior Men 500		
1.	GERMANY	01:27.020
2.	HUNGARY	01:29.096
3.	UKRAINE	01:29.188

[Click here to find out full results](#)

K4 Junior Women 500		
1.	KOHALMI Emese (HUN)	01:58.013
2.	LEANIUK Veranika (BLR)	02:02.743
3.	FRIEIRO Carla (ESP)	02:02.837
C2 Junior Women 500		
1.	JENSEN/OSENDE (CAN)	02:04.612
2.	GONCZOL/OPAVSZKY (HUN)	02:07.135
3.	LI/LI (CHN)	02:07.601
K1 U23 Women 500		
1.	PUPP Noemi (HUN)	01:56.067
2.	PULAWSKA Małgorzata (POL)	01:57.213
3.	IVERSEN Bolette (DEN)	01:57.789
K4 U23 Men 500		
1.	AUSTRALIA	01:24.793
2.	DENMARK	01:25.199
3.	HUNGARY	01:25.237



ANTI-DOPING



WikiPaddle:
[Anti-doping 101](#)
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ICF STEPS UP ANTI-DOPING EDUCATION PROGRAMME

ATHLETE SUPPORT UNDERLINES STRENGTH OF CAMPAIGN

Chances are, if you have ever raced in an International Canoe Federation event, you will have been drug-tested. Many of you will have been tapped on the shoulder more than once.

The ICF is confident almost all its athletes would never cheat. Competitors have got where they are through hard work, discipline, great coaching and a fierce desire to succeed.

But the ICF is determined to enhance its reputation as one of the cleanest sports in the world, across all ten of its disciplines. To achieve this, it combines both a targeted and random drug-testing approach during and outside of competitions.

The ICF knows that some athletes might be tempted to try and get an advantage over their opponents by using substances that are illegal. But with testing methods becoming more sophisticated all the time, the chances of a competitor getting away with it are narrowing all the time.

"Most of the athletes that compete in our sport are 100 per cent clean, and would never contemplate bending the rules," ICF anti-doping manager, Michel Alarcon, said. "We owe it to these athletes, and the thousands of canoe supporters, to do everything possible to eliminate the cheats. In a perfect world our sport would be 100 per cent clean, and that is the target we are setting ourselves.

“

WE OWE IT TO THESE ATHLETES, AND THE THOUSANDS OF CANOE SUPPORTERS, TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ELIMINATE THE CHEATS. IN A PERFECT WORLD OUR SPORT WOULD BE 100 PER CENT CLEAN, AND THAT IS THE TARGET WE ARE SETTING OURSELVES.

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THE BATTLE FOR A CLEAN SPORT IS STILL NOT WON, BUT WE ARE VERY FOCUSED ON WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE, AND HOW WE WILL GET THERE.

"It starts with education. The ICF has embarked on an extensive program which gives all our athletes access to the very latest drug education, so there can be no excuses."

In 2019 the ICF congress supported a proposal that made it mandatory for all athletes competing in international competitions to have completed an online anti-doping course. The rule has been enforced at all ICF competitions, and across all ICF disciplines, for world cups and world championships.

"Through this online education course, the ICF in collaboration with the WADA promotes positive attitudes to avoiding doping," Mr Alarcon said.

"The ICF ensures that all international level athlete are given information about the dangers of doping and the importance of anti-doping controls, ensuring that they understand their rights and obligations toward anti-doping.

"The athletes are fully aware of the importance of this course, and are very supportive."

The ICF has also stepped up its education program for the next generation of world champions and Olympians, running a series of education stands at major junior events in conjunction with the host nation's anti-doping agency.

In 2019 there were stands at the junior and U23 canoe sprint and canoe slalom world championships, staffed by experts in the field of anti-doping.

As an added incentive, fun quiz questions and product giveaways and prizes were offered to participants.

"Athletes are informed at these stands about the anti-doping rules, their rights and obligations," Mr Alarcon said.

"They can ask any questions to the ICF anti-doping expert and can test their knowledge by participating in a quiz."

"Several ICF manufacturer partners, including Braca, Vajda and Nelo, supported the initiative, and provided incentives to help engage with the athletes."



Focus this year will be on the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, and as part of the build-up to the event, a drug education outreach program was conducted during the sprint and Paralympic test event in Tokyo in 2019.

Potential Olympic and Paralympic athletes were given the opportunity to pledge their engagement in a clean and fair canoeing program in Tokyo.

"The battle for a clean sport is still not won, but we are very focused on what we want to achieve, and how we will get there," Mr Alarcon said.

"Like any sport, there are canoeing athletes who will cheat. But our message is, you will be caught, and there is no place in our sport for you."

"Our athletes now have more information available to them, and more opportunities to access that information, than at any time in the history of canoeing. There simply is no excuse for not knowing right from wrong."



MARATHON

World Championships



FACTS & FIGURES

Location:
Shaoxing,
China

Statistics:
38 nations took part.
462 boats entered the competition.

Video stream:
Over 39 hours of live coverage from Shaoxing on YouTube, Facebook, and Huya.
7.1 million views in China.

WikiPaddle:
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MARATHON MILESTONES TUMBLE IN SHAOXING

CHINA TURNS ON A SHOW TO REMEMBER

Legends enhanced their reputations, new stars emerged, and the biggest name in men's racing returned home before competition even started at the 2019 ICF canoe marathon world championships in Shaoxing, China.

Denmark's Mads Pedersen achieved what no other athlete had been able to do in the history of marathon world championships. Hungary's Renata Csay picked up an incredible 20th ICF gold medal, and four-time C1 world champion Manuel Campos of Spain won his first ever C2 gold medal.

Amid all the euphoria, South African legend Hank McGregor was forced to leave China on the eve of the Championships, his aching body unable to recover from a debilitating illness which made it impossible for the 11-time gold medalist to even get on the water.

While McGregor was sorely missed, especially by his 2018 K2 gold medal partner, Andy Birkett, there could be no denying the incredible performances of Csay and Pedersen.

The 22-year-old Dane made canoe marathon history, becoming the first ever athlete to win both an U23 and a senior world title at the same ICF championships.

Pedersen stunned the big Chinese crowd by repeating his performance from 24 hours

“

WHEN I WOKE UP
THIS MORNING I
DID A LITTLE PADDLE
TO LOOSEN UP, AND
AFTER, I TOLD MY
COACH THAT TODAY
I FELT VERY GOOD.
SO I BELIEVED IN IT
FROM THE START.

earlier to chisel his name into the record books, this time beating the best paddlers in the world to take the gold medal.

Earlier this year Pedersen won both the U23 and senior European canoe marathon titles in the space of 24 hours, but few thought it possible to do it against the best on the planet.

The title was not decided until the final 20 metres, with Pedersen outsprinting a pack of four that included South Africa's defending world champion, Andy Birkett, and three-time minor medalist Jose Ramalho of Portugal.

"I can't believe this came true," he said. "When I woke up this morning I did a little paddle to loosen up, and after, I told my coach that today I felt very good. So I believed in it from the start."

"I went out there and wanted to give it my best shot, but halfway through the race I was starting to feel very tired, so I just tried to ride some good washes. I was trying to save my lungs, because I could feel them after yesterday."

"In the end I had some energy so I just spent it."

Pedersen has been on the canoe marathon scene for several years, but has never filled the potential many experts believed he had.

But 2019 has been his breakout year, culminating with his part of canoe marathon history in Shaoxing.

"I put in everything I've got every day, and I have a very good coach, and my family and all my friends were helping me," Pedersen said.

"At work I get some good hours, so I have some good space to do my training. Given all that support, it's amazing."

Silver went to Ramalho, while Argentina's Franco Ramalho took the bronze. Defending champion Birkett was unable to match the frenetic finish of the medalists, eventually finishing fourth.



Manuel Antonio Campos (Spain)

[View athlete bio](#)



CLICK HERE TO SEE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SENIOR C1 AND K1 RACES

Mads Brandt Pedersen (Denmark)

[View athlete bio](#)

“

WE'VE BEEN TRAINING FOR FOUR YEARS NOW IN MARATHON, WE LEFT SPRINT BECAUSE WE REALLY WANTED TO REACH THIS POSITION AT LEAST ONCE. NOW IT'S DONE.

France's Jeremy Candy and Quentin Urban won their country's first ever men's K2 gold medal, the culmination of several years training together with the goal of becoming world champions.

"We are very happy to be European champions, world champions and France's first K2 gold medalists," Urban said.

The French had to see off a challenge from Hungary's Adrian Boros and Kristzian Mathe and Argentine brothers Franco and Dardo Balboa. But Candy said coming into the last portage he felt they could make history.

"We hadn't had any trouble during the race, so I thought if we came first into the portage it would be a good chance for us to win," he said.

"We've been training for four years now in marathon, we left sprint because we really wanted to reach this position at least once. Now it's done. Of course we will be back."

It was an emotional men's C2 gold for Spain's Manuel Campos and Diego Romero, when they outlasted Poland's Mateusz Zuchora and Wiktor Glažunow after a grueling 25.90 kilometres.

It was a first C2 gold medal for Campos after five minor medals, while Romero paid tribute to his grandmother, who passed away on the eve of the race. It was also a successful defence of the C2 gold he won alongside Oscar Grana in 2018.

"I'm very happy to win the gold again, and especially because yesterday my grandmother died, so it is very special for me," Romero said.

"I just tried to stay focused on the competition and put all the pressure behind me. There is nothing I could do, so I just tried to do my best."

The gold was a major breakthrough for Campos, a four-time C1 world champion who had never won a C2 gold before.

"This is a very special medal for me, because it's my 20th world championship medal," Campos said.

"Since 2011 I have been doing C2, and I have some bronze and silver medals, but I have not been able to win a gold. So this is very important for me."



20 YEARS, 20 WORLD TITLES – THE REMARKABLE RECORD OF RENATA CSAY

VETERAN ALREADY DREAMING OF TITLE NUMBER 21

12 years later and instead of carrying her boat, Zsofia Czelia-Voros found herself sitting in the same kayak, still starry-eyed but this time helping Csay to her 20th ICF world championship gold medal.

Csay won her first ICF gold medal back in 1999, as a 22-year-old in a K2 alongside Andrea Pitz. Now she has a gold medal for every year she has raced – 13 of them coming in K2, and seven in individual K1 races.

It goes without saying Csay is the most successful canoe marathon paddler ever. Full stop. Alongside her 20 gold medals, she also has 11 silver medals – and no bronze. There are few athletes in any sport who can boast such dominance.

Almost as famous as her exploits on the water are her post-race interviews. Never one to blow her own trumpet, even after notching up her 20th gold medal she was keeping things low key.

"I'm so thankful that I can still be here," Csay said. "I don't know how I keep doing it, I just like paddling. I will come back next year."

Her partner was caught up in the emotion though. Csay stood smiling alongside Czelia-Voros as she recounted for the Chinese audience her experience from 12 years ago.

"I'm so happy that she won her 20th with me, because I remember in 2007 the championship was in Györ, and she was there," Czelia-Voros said.

"I was running back to get her boat, because I was a volunteer then, and I had to get her boat to boat control.

"I was so happy then, I did not think in my dreams that I would be paddling with her."

say and Czelia-Voros had to work hard to defend the gold medal they won last year. Two Spanish boats teamed up to make life difficult for the pre-race favourites, and it wasn't until the final sprint that they were able to break free.

"It was a bit tough, I think we had a big mistake at the first portage, but I think we managed because we knew that we could catch them," Czelia-Voros said.

"And then we just focused on the last portage, and we did it really well."

"We are always watching everyone who starts in the race, but the Spanish boats were very good. We wanted to break away, but they were good."



Liudmyla Babak
(Ukraine)

[View athlete bio](#)



I DON'T KNOW HOW I KEEP DOING IT, I JUST LIKE PADDLING. I WILL COME BACK NEXT YEAR.

KISZLI AND BABAK – THE FUTURE OF WOMEN'S CANOE MARATHON

YOUNG GUNS HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO DOMINATE FOR A LONG TIME



Vanda Kiszli refuses to accept any comparisons with Csay, but in Shaoxing confirmed herself as the next big name in female K1 paddling with a successful defence of her ICF world championship title.

The 25-year-old Hungarian outsprinted her teammate and training partner Zsofia Czellai-Voros to snatch the K1 gold, with Great Britain's Lizzie Broughton taking the bronze. Kiszli said it was much harder defending her world title than winning her first one.

"I think every girl wants to beat me, and in my head I am the world champion, so I have to work harder and need to dominate or be there at the front, so I think it is harder," she said.

"I felt in control, because I knew that Zsofia is very strong, and I wanted to be there with her. I knew if I could be with her I could be top three. So that was my tactic.

"I knew the other girls had been doing sprints this year, so I knew they were fast. But I knew this was 26 kilometres and I hoped that I was stronger than them and better at 26. "I just ran as fast as I could, and when I jumped in the boat at the last portage, I just told myself I had to do it, I had to get to the front."

“

**I THINK EVERY GIRL WANTS TO BEAT ME, AND
IN MY HEAD I AM THE WORLD CHAMPION,
SO I HAVE TO WORK HARDER AND NEED TO
DOMINATE OR BE THERE AT THE FRONT, SO I
THINK IT IS HARDER**

Kiszli's win makes her just the second Hungarian woman to win multiple K1 world titles. Marathon legend and Hungarian teammate Renata Csay is a mile out in front with seven world championship wins.

Understandably, Kiszli is uncomfortable with any comparisons with an athlete considered a paddling God in her country.

"I don't want to think about this, because I just want to concentrate on my race, and focus on me," she said.

"I think nobody will catch her, because she has so many titles, and she is a legend."

Liudmyla Babak admits sitting out the front of a women's C1 canoe marathon field can sometimes be a bit boring, but she still plans to dominate the sport for at least another decade.



Bridgitte Hartley
(South Africa)

[View athlete bio](#)



The 22-year-old Ukrainian in Shaoxing notched up her third consecutive C1 world championship title, adding it to a short course title she won earlier in the week. She is the dominant paddler in the women's canoe discipline, a pocket-rocket who seems to get better every year.

The numbers are growing at every world championships, and younger paddlers are coming through. But they are making little impact on the Ukrainian.

"The addition of the short event has made it more difficult for me to change between the two, so that is a challenge," Babak said.

"To be honest, with the long distance sometimes it is a bit boring. But women's canoeing is improving, because now the number of women competing has almost doubled in recent years, and that is a good sign."

For a while China's Caiyun Xin challenged Babak, but it was only momentary. When the three-time world champion decided she'd had enough of someone sitting on her shoulder, she put on a quick burst and the race was over.

So at just 22 Babak already has four world titles. She could continue to dominate for many years to come, but finding ways to keep her interested and to stop feeling 'bored' might be the biggest challenge.

One of her goals is to spread the love for marathon, especially in her country.

"I want to stay as world champion for as long as I can. My coach tells me I should aim for another 10 or even 15 years," Babak said.

"In Ukraine I am quite famous and people recognise me, but marathon is not so well known there. There needs to be more development of the sport. I would like to show Ukrainians that it is a very difficult kind of sport, but it's also a very exciting sport."

Babak finished 90 seconds ahead of Xin, while Hungary's Zsofia Kisban was another minute back in third place.

SPRINT RACES PROVE A GOOD DISTRACTION FOR WEARY MARATHON PADDLERS

NEW FORMAT RECEIVES THUMBS UP FROM ATHLETES

This year saw the introduction of sprint races, a frenetic 3.60 kilometre event which many athletes used as an opportunity to blow the cobwebs out before the marathon racing later in the week.

The new format proved very popular, with reigning long distance world champion Vanda Kiszli leading a gold medal charge for Hungary, while there were also triumphs for Ukraine, Spain and France.

Kiszli added the new short race world title to her resumé as one of three gold medals for Hungary. Eszter Rendessy won the women's junior K1 and Benedek Horvath the men's junior C1.

France's Cyrille Carre made a successful return to canoe marathon with gold in the men's K1 short race, Ukraine's Liudmyla Babak added a short race C1 title to her impressive long distance marathon resumé, and Spain's Diego Romero added a men's C1 short race to his C2 world title from 2018.

The addition of the 3.60 kilometre provided new challenges for the athletes, with Kiszli and Babak both making the transition with ease. Kiszli said she was unsure how the race would unfold.

"It was so quick, we started and then we were on the last lap," Kiszli said.

"I didn't know if I would be any good, because I knew the other girls were very fast. So I just focussed on me and did my race."

"It was a good warm-up for me ahead of this weekend. I'm a little bit nervous because I am the world champion, so everyone wants to beat me."

Kiszli beat Serbia's Kristina Bedec, with Spain's Eva Barrios taking the bronze.

France's Carre showed the benefit of a big season of canoe sprint racing with a solid win in the men's K1 short race, edging out teammate Jeremy Candy for the gold. Carre won bronze at the 2013 world marathon championships in the men's K1, but has focussed more on sprint racing since then.

This year's world championships fitted into his schedule, and proved a good distraction for Carre from his efforts



to qualify in the K1 1000 for next year's Olympic Games in Tokyo.

"It was possible for me to compete at this year's world championships, and with the short distance race it worked well for me," Carre said.

"Training for the 1000 it is similar to this format, so it is not a problem. For the 1000 I need a lot of training, but I'm not afraid about that. But we will wait and see if it also works for the marathon distance."

Argentina's Franco Balboa took the bronze.

Diego Romero won C2 marathon gold in Portugal last year alongside Oscar Grana, and in Shaoxing won his first individual world title. He edged out teammate Manuel Campos, with the Czech Republic's Jakub Brezina taking the bronze.

Liudmyla Babak has dominated women's canoe racing in recent years, and successfully added the short course title to the marathon world titles she has won for Ukraine. Hungary's Zsofia Kisban was second, while China's Ying Wang gave the host nation its second bronze medal for the day.



Zsofia Kisban
(Hungary)

[View athlete bio](#)

“

WOMEN'S CANOEING IS IMPROVING, BECAUSE NOW THE NUMBER OF WOMEN COMPETING HAS ALMOST DOUBLED IN RECENT YEARS, AND THAT IS A GOOD SIGN.



NEXT GEN GIVE MARATHON FANS PLENTY TO BE EXCITED ABOUT

DEPTH IN THE SPORT ON SHOW IN CHINA



[View athlete bio](#)

The next generation of canoe marathon paddlers were on show in Shaoxing, and there is plenty for the sport to be excited about. Heading the list is history-making Mads Pedersen of Denmark, while Hungary's Lili Katona confirmed herself as a star of the future.

The U23 world title was the first step in Pedersen's history-making Shaoxing adventure.

"I'm super happy to be able to do what I'm good at, and to be successful is just amazing," Pedersen said.

"We'll see how fresh I am tomorrow, but I am keen to get out there and race again. We'll see how much energy I have."



Pedersen and Danish teammate Thorbjorn Rask cleared out from the rest of the field during the first lap of the 25.90 kilometre race, and the pair had the race to themselves.

Hungary has been a dominant force in canoe marathon almost since the very first world championships. In Shaoxing they showed that is set to continue for many more years, picking up four U23 and junior world titles. One of the most convincing wins came from U23 K1 paddler Katona, who finished more than one minute ahead of Norway's Anna Sletsjoe.

Nobody was more surprised than Katona, who missed three months of training over the European winter with an injured shoulder.

"It was my dream to be a world champion, and now my dream is true, it's amazing," Katona said.

"It was hard because I had a problem with my shoulder, so I didn't know if I could do it. It was a surprise for me."

One of the tightest finishes of the day came in the men's junior K2, with Hungary's Zsombor Ory and Tamas Erdelyi outsprinting South Africa's David Evans and Hamish Mackenzie to take the gold by slightly more than one second. It was a third minor medal for the South Africans.



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I DIDN'T KNOW IF I WOULD BE ANY GOOD, BECAUSE I KNEW THE OTHER GIRLS WERE VERY FAST. SO I JUST FOCUSED ON ME AND DID MY RACE.

“

**IT WAS MY DREAM TO BE
A WORLD CHAMPION,
AND NOW MY DREAM IS
TRUE, IT'S AMAZING**

"It was a very hard race, but we felt confident we could be strong at the finish," Ory said.

"We are also very good friends and have been paddling together for two years, so that helps a lot. South Africa and Denmark are both very strong, so we don't know how we won this race."

Benedek Horvath followed up his gold medal from the men's junior C1 on Thursday with Hungarian gold in the men's junior C2 alongside Oliver Nagy.

It was a hard fought race, with the Hungarians having to see off as determined effort from the Chinese crew of Zihang Wang and Jiadong Zhu, which even saw the two boats collide.

"The Chinese boys tried to cut the angle, but we did not stop," Nagy said.

"The race was pretty hard, we didn't expect the Chinese boat to be so strong. I think in the last three kilometres we felt like our technique and our pace was good enough to win."

It was also a second gold medal for Eszter Rendessy, following her K1 junior gold medal from the opening day with a K2 gold alongside Emese Kohalmi.

"We felt very good, it was our plan to go out hard," Rendessy said.

"We were able to train with the senior team in Hungary. We just pushed from the start, but did not feel confident we could win until the finish."

France's Clemence LeBlanc could not have been more impressive in the first ever junior C1 world championship final, withstanding a spirited challenge from Hungary's Csenge Molnar.



CLICK HERE
TO SEE SENIOR
C2 AND K2
HIGHLIGHTS

Cyrille Carre
(France)

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"It was a very hard race, the Hungarian is very good," LeBlanc said.

"I did not feel confident. The start was very hard because I was second, so I had to work hard."

Ukraine's Denys Davydov followed up his European U23 C1 title with a close win in Friday's world championship final, finishing just two seconds ahead of Poland's Mateusz Borgiel.



Qiqi Xu (China)

[View athlete bio](#)

RESULTS

[Click here to find out full results](#)

C1 Women

1.	BABAK Liudmyla (UKR)	01:19:30.84
2.	XIN Caiyun (CHN)	01:21:03.84
3.	KISBAN Zsophia (HUN)	01:21:56.98

C1 Men

1.	CAMPOS Manuel (ESP)	02:05:31.65
2.	BREZINA Jakub (CZE)	02:05:42.04
3.	SHAMSHURIN Kirill (RUS)	02:05:42.04

K1 Women

1.	KISZLI Vanda (HUN)	02:03:06.75
2.	CZELLAI-VOROS Zsophia (HUN)	02:03:13.76
3.	BROUGHTON Lizzie (GBR)	02:03:17.26

K1 Men

1.	PEDERSEN Mads (DEN)	02:08:34.21
2.	RAMALHO Jose (POR)	02:08:35.53
3.	BALBOA Franco (ARG)	02:08:36.51

Men's C2

1.	CAMPOS/ROMERO (ESP)	01:59:06.33
2.	ZUCHORA/BORGIEL (POL)	01:59:19.77
3.	LACZO/NAGY (HUN)	02:00:33.31

Women's K2

1.	CZELLAI-VOROS/CSAY (HUN)	01:56:30.22
2.	FERNANDEZ/ALVAREZ (ESP)	01:56:33.99
3.	OSA/TOLEDO (ESP)	01:56:56.72

Men's K2

1.	URBAN/CANDY (FRA)	01:58:45.25
2.	BOROS/MATHE (HUN)	01:58:49.19
3.	BALBOA/BALBOA (ARG)	01:58:55.97

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Over 41 hours
of live coverage

Statistics:
25 nations
More than 200 athletes

WikiPaddle:
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STARS SHINE UNDER LIGHTS AT SORT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONS MAKE MOST OF PERFECT SETTING

Japan's Hitomi Takaku broke through for her first world title and American Dane Jackson regained the crown he lost two years ago on a dramatic final night under lights at the ICF canoe freestyle world championships in Sort, Spain.

A capacity crowd lined the banks of the purpose-built freestyle venue, and watched as first Takaku and then Jackson showcased some of the most exciting moves in the sport to clinch gold.

Two years earlier in San Juan, Argentina, Takaku finished third and Jackson had to settle for silver, but the pair were leaving nothing to chance on Saturday night.

Takaku threw down a score of 646.67 on her second of three rides, which turned out to be more than enough to clinch the title.

"I'm so excited, so happy, this is the best day of my life," Takaku said.

"It was so hard under the lights, because not always my moves were working. But of course, tonight will be a party night."

France's Marlène Devillez took the silver with 570 points, a repeat of her result from Argentina, while Poland's Zofia Tula improved one place to take the bronze with 553.33 points.



66

I'M SO EXCITED,
SO HAPPY, THIS
IS THE BEST DAY
OF MY LIFE.

Two years ago Jackson watched on as Spain's Joaquim Fontane snatched away his world crown with a massive final round ride. In Sort Fontane was not able to repeat the heroics in front of his noisy home crowd, having to settle for silver behind the now three-time world champion.

"It was a super-sick final, all these guys were paddling so well, and it's always such a challenge, because in three rides, anything can happen," Jackson said.

Dane Jackson
(USA)
[View athlete bio](#)

"Until I saw the old videos, it didn't really hit me that my dad had won here 18 years ago, and now I get to win one in the exact same place, the same arena."

"I'm so fired up. I just hoped this year for a good time, to hang out with good friends all over the world, but to be able to come out on top feels good."

Jackson sealed the gold with his first ride of the night, picking up 1406.67 points which could not be topped. Defending champion Fontane took silver with 1260 points, while France's Sébastien Devred repeated his result of two years ago to win silver with 1211.67 points.

American Jordan Poffenberger won his second canoe freestyle world title, taking gold in the men's open canoe surface final at the 2019 ICF world championships.

Poffenberger qualified last for the five-man final, but then recorded 173.33 on his first ride to place the rest of the finalists under pressure.

No-one was able to better Poffenberger's mark, with Frenchman Jean-Yves Moustrou taking silver with 153.33, and Germany's Philip Josef taking bronze with 126.67.

"Really the hope is to lay down a solid ride, so that way with the next couple of runs I can try and better it," Poffenberger said.

"Each run I was shooting for a bigger score, but sometimes your first ride is your best one. It was weird because I was having a lot of trouble in my preliminary rounds, but in practice I was feeling very confident."

"So I knew with more pressure on me I tend to rip it out, so I think the extra pressure helped me perform a little better. Being first up is definitely nerve-wracking, it's definitely a little more stressful but at the same time, it's fun being on the water."



 CLICK HERE TO SEE
CANOE FREESTYLE'S
OLYMPIC ASPIRATIONS
AND 2019 SENIORS
HIGHLIGHTS

Teenager Tom Dolle has long been talked about as a future star of men's freestyle canoeing, so there was a lot of interest in how the Frenchman would perform in Sort at his first senior world championships.

No-one left Spain disappointed, with Dolle showing maturity beyond his years to win a gold medal in the canoe decked competition in the face of some of the toughest competition on the planet. 18-year-old Dolle withstood a nerve-wracking final ride from reigning world champion, Dane Jackson, with the American coming up just short of the 960 posted by Dolle on his first run.

For Dolle it was a nervous wait, with Jackson the last paddler on the water.

"I can't believe it, really," Dolle said.

"I knew I couldn't do better, but I knew they could do better, so I just had to watch and hope for the best. I'm super-stoked that we all finished so close to each other, it was a really tight battle."

"I don't really train much in the canoe, but the kayak helps a lot for canoe. It doesn't really matter how much training you do in canoe when you do kayak at the same time."

I'M SO FIRED UP. I JUST HOPED THIS YEAR FOR A GOOD TIME, TO HANG OUT WITH GOOD FRIENDS ALL OVER THE WORLD, BUT TO BE ABLE TO COME OUT ON TOP FEELS GOOD."

"Senior is so much harder, there's so much pressure."

Jackson posted 950 to take the silver, while his American teammate, Jordan Poffenberger, followed his canoe surface gold from 24 hours earlier with bronze with a score of 943.33.

THE FUTURE FOR FREESTYLE LOOKS FINE

YOUNG GUNS HAVE WHAT IT TAKES

A teenager competing at his first international event and a defending world champion took the honours in the junior competition in Sort.

Two years after causing a major boilover at the 2017 world championships, Great Britain's Ottolie Robinson-Shaw proved once again she is the best junior female paddler on the planet with a convincing gold medal performance in Spain.

"I think I had more confidence in myself, and I think that's what I lacked in Argentina," Robinson-Shaw said.

"I didn't think I could do it until the last night, and then it happened. But until that moment when I believed, it wasn't going to happen."

17-year-old Robinson-Shaw recorded 536.67 on her first ride in the final, with USA's Olivia McGinnis taking the silver with 340. Another American, Katie Fankhouser, took the bronze with 336.67.

Mason Hargrove did not know what to expect when he arrived in Sort for his first ever international competition, but he showed he belongs with the best with a commanding gold-medal performance in the men's junior final.

16-year-old Hargrove, who grew up wanting to be like three-time world champion, Dane Jackson, posted a massive 960 points on his first ride, a score that proved enough for the title.

"I'm so stoked, I just came out here to have fun, and I got the win," Hargrove said.

"I was a little kid watching the sport, watching Dane throw down big rides, and I knew I wanted to do that one day. With a bunch of hard work I got here, I'm so happy to have got the win."

"It's definitely nerve-wracking, but I'm just so happy for my friends, even if they had beaten me."

Fellow American Dally Kellogg took the silver with 810 points, while Jack Newland won Australia's first-ever junior freestyle medal, finishing third with 660 points.

Throwing tricks in a swimming pool would not seem the most ideal preparation for a canoe freestyle world championships, but it was good enough to help 18-year-old Jack Newland make Australian history at the 2019 ICF world championships.

“

I KNEW I COULDN'T DO BETTER, BUT I KNEW THEY COULD DO BETTER, SO I JUST HAD TO WATCH AND HOPE FOR THE BEST. I'M SUPER-STOKED THAT WE ALL FINISHED SO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER



The Geelong teenager became Australia's first ever junior world championship medalist, when he took bronze in the men's kayak surface final.

Unlike most of his opponents, who train on some of the best whitewater in the world, Newland has to make do with a swimming pool. But it didn't phase him on Friday.

"It's unbelievable, I'm so stoked. This is crazy," Newland said.



Tom Dolle (France)

[View athlete bio](#)

Jack Newland (Australia)

[View athlete bio](#)



"It's been stressful, with a lot of butterflies, but I've been excited for most of the day. I didn't know I could get on the podium."

"It takes a long time in a swimming pool. It's good, it's fantastic training, but you've got to put in the hard work."

Newland said he went to Sort hoping to finish top ten, after finishing top 15 in Argentina in 2017. He created history on Friday morning by becoming the first Australian to make a junior freestyle world championship final, and then scored 660 points on his first ride in the final to take the bronze.

He said training in a pool four times a week may have given him an advantage over other athletes.

"Swimming pool training gives you a lot of boat control and strength, but it doesn't give you the feel for features and waves such as this one," he said.

"You really are going in unknown. It took me four days when I got here to get use to the feature, because it's completely different to what I've paddled before, and obviously completely different to a swimming pool."

In two years' time Newland will compete against the seniors for the first time.

"I'll need a lot more swimming pool practice, and hopefully a lot more whitewater practice," he said.

"I finish school pretty soon, so I'm pretty excited for the future, that's for sure."



RESULTS

[Click here to find out full results](#)

Canoe Decked Surface

1.	DOLLE Tom (FRA)	960.00
2.	JACKSON Dane (USA)	950.00
3.	POFFENBERGER Jordan (USA)	943.33

Men's Kayak Squirt

1.	WRIGHT Clay (USA)	1500.00
2.	EDWARDS Alex (GBR)	1066.67
3.	WILSON Sam (GBR)	943.33

Men's Kayak Surface

1.	JACKSON Dane (USA)	1406.67
2.	FONTANE I MASO Joaquim (ESP)	1260.00
3.	DEVRED Sebastien (FRA)	1211.67

Men's Kayak Surface Junior

1.	HARGROVE Mason (USA)	960.00
2.	KELLOGG Dally (USA)	810.00
3.	NEWLAND Jack (AUS)	660.00

Open Canoe Surface

1.	POFFENBERGER Jordan (USA)	173.33
2.	MOUSTROU Jean-Yves (FRA)	153.33
3.	JOSEF Philip (GER)	126.67

Women's Kayak Squirt

1.	WALL Rose (USA)	1493.33
2.	TAKAKU Hitomi (JPN)	1080.00
3.	ROBINSON-SHAW Otilie (GBR)	780.00

Women's Kayak Surface

1.	TAKAKU Hitomi (JPN)	646.67
2.	DEVILLEZ Marlene (FRA)	570.00
3.	TULA Zofia (POL)	553.33

Women's Kayak Surface Junior

1.	ROBINSON-SHAW Otilie (GBR)	536.67
2.	MCGINNIS Olivia (USA)	340.00
3.	FANKHOUSER Katie (USA)	336.67

WILDWATER

World Championships



FACTS & FIGURES

Location: La Seu d'Urgell, Spain

Statistics: 32 nations took part. 146 athletes competed.

WikiPaddle: [Wildwater Canoeing 101](#)
Click here to find out

2019 championships run in conjunction with slalom world titles.

IT'S A FRENCH REVOLUTION AT WILDWATER CHAMPIONSHIPS

FRANCE TAKE MORE THAN HALF THE WORLD TITLES IN LA SEU

Why is it that certain countries dominate particular sports? Why is it that Hungary dominates canoe sprint, why the Czech Republic and Slovakia are canoe slalom powerhouses, why South Africa is so good at canoe ocean racing and canoe marathon and why USA has so much canoe freestyle talent?

And how come France is so damn good at wildwater canoeing? We're talking seven gold medals out of a possible 11 at the 2019 ICF world championships. It was a very impressive flexing of the muscles by Les Bleus, leaving in their wake a who's who of wildwater canoeing in recent years.

Four of the gold medals came on the final day of competition in La Seu, Spain. They won the women's kayak, men's canoe and men's and women's C2 world titles, in something of a day out for the French squad.

Louis Lapointe picked up double gold, winning the men's C1 and teaming up with Tony Debray to take the men's C2 title.

"Today I did a perfect run, and I'm proud to have done a run like this in the final where there is a lot of pressure," Lapointe said after his C1 win.

"To become a world champion is a dream for me that has now come true. We do a lot of training and a lot of racing here. I've done a lot of training and a lot of work to do a run like this so I'm proud of it."

Czech Ondrej Rolenc, looking for a fourth C1 world title, was 0.44 seconds behind,

“

TO BECOME A WORLD CHAMPION IS A DREAM FOR ME THAT HAS NOW COME TRUE. WE DO A LOT OF TRAINING AND A LOT OF RACING HERE. I'VE DONE A LOT OF TRAINING AND A LOT OF WORK TO DO A RUN LIKE THIS SO I'M PROUD OF IT.

while fellow Czech Vladimir Slanina was third.

It was a similar margin in the men's C2, where Lapointe and Debray finished 0.41 seconds ahead of Czech's Marek Rygel and Petr Vesely, with France's Stephane Santamaria and Quentin Dazeur taking the bronze.

"My first run in the C1 was not my best, so after the run I spoke with Louis because he had won the gold," Debray said.

"He had been good on this course, so we spoke about that, and we found a good line, which was very important. Being together in a C2 is very different to being in a C1."

Imagine competing in your first ever world championships, overcoming the nerves and the doubts to post a perfect run, only to see your run get pipped by just 0.01 of a second?

That's what happened to France's Felix Bouvet in the men's K1 in La Seu. But he couldn't be too disappointed, as the chap who beat him is one of the best men's wildwater K1 paddlers ever.

Slovenia's Nejc Znidarcic added to his already stellar career with another world title, his fourth, but it could not have been closer.

Bouvet still managed a smile while collecting his silver medal, while another Frenchman, Hugues Moret, finished third.

"It's amazing, I've had the perfect season," the 35-year-old Slovenian said.

"I won the Europeans and the world cups, and for sure this was the goal to win once again here. I made it, but just barely."

"I think I've won everything that's possible, but I find motivation in my teammates because they are all world champions and European champions. If it wasn't for them I don't think I would be so fast."

One of the happiest winners on the final day of wildwater racing was France's Phenicia Dupras, who won her first ever women's K1 final. She beat the Czech pairing of Anezka Paloudova and Barbora Dimovova.

"I've been waiting for this for maybe three years," Dupras said.

"In Pau in 2017 I was really focused and hoping for a good result, but it didn't come. So I've been searching for this medal."

"I wasn't worried about the others, I was focusing on myself. I knew I could do a good run with great speed. It's been a lot of work, and to share this with all the French paddling community is very special."

Czech Martina Satkova was one of the favourites for the women's K1, but ran into trouble during her run and eventually finished 14th. But the Czech paddler bounced back less than one hour later to take the women's C1 gold.

"Today was a really mixed day, one really bad run and now a gold run, I'm super happy," Satkova said.



[CLICK HERE TO SEE AN EXPLANATION OF WILDWATER CANOEING AND HOW IT DIFFERS TO SLALOM BY MATINA SATKOVA](#)



"I think it has been four years since I was world champion, I'm so happy to be back."

"After the K1 I just tried to avoid people saying they felt sorry for me, and concentrated on cheering on the Czech team. I just told myself it was my last run for the day so I needed to do my best, and I did it."

"All the work I did, I'm so happy I did it, and I will continue to do it."

Defending world champion Cecilia Panato of Italy finished second, and France's Elsa Gaubert took the bronze.

Gaubert did not have to wait long though to taste success, teaming up with Margot Beziat to win the women's C2.

"This is our first time of being world champions and we have won it together," Gaubert said.

"We train a lot in C1, but this is not two C1's in a C2, this is two girls in a C2, and we are 100 per cent together. That has helped us win today."



Martina Satkova
(Czech Republic)

[View athlete bio](#)



WE KNEW THE TIME THAT WE COULD DO AT THIS STADIUM, BECAUSE WE HAVE DONE A LOT OF RACES HERE.

"We have a lot of emotion, but we are friends and we think that helps us," Beziat said.

Italy's Marlene Ricciardi and Cecilia Panato took the silver, and Germany's Maren Lutz and Sabrina Barm took the bronze.

France's dominance on the final day should not have come as a surprise, given the way the country dominated the team events on the opening day of competition by winning three of the five gold medals on offer.

The French won the men's C1, men's C2 and women's C1 world titles, with the Czech Republic and Slovenia taking the remaining two titles.

Louis Lapointe, Tony Debray and Quentin Dazeur gave a taste of what was to come with a convincing victory in the men's C1.

They finished 1.94 seconds ahead of the Czech Republic, with Croatia taking the bronze.

"We are very happy, it was a good race," Debray said.

"We had a very good start, and the second part was

just okay. The objective was to win, so we are very happy."

Lapointe said he felt confident their time would go close to winning the gold.

"We knew the time that we could do at this stadium, because we have done a lot of races here," he said.

"Our time was very good, so even though we were waiting at the finish line it was not so bad for us."

The trio later teamed up with Stephane Santamaria, Lucas Pazat and Ancelin Gourjault to win the men's C2 team race, finishing more than nine seconds ahead of Germany, with the Czech Republic finishing third.

France's third gold medal came in the women's C1 team event, with Elsa Gaubert, Helene Raguenes and Margo Beziat triumphing ahead of the Czech Republic, with Germany third.

The Czech Republic successfully defended their women's K1 team crown, with Martina Satkova, Anezka Paloudova and Barbora Dimovova just edging out France, with Germany a full second behind in third.

"At the beginning we made a little mistake, so at the first split time we were sitting in second or third place, so when

we got to the finish line and I saw we were first, it was so amazing," Satkova said.

"This is such a hard course, it's really easy to make a mistake. So this is so nice to win."

The trio were not perturbed about going up against each other in the individual events later in the week, with Paloudova revealing the team shares a close bond.

"The spirit on the Czech team is so good, we do a lot of things together, so I think it makes us powerful," she said.

"We are still friends and we are still sharing a house together for this week."

Slovenia also successfully defended their world crown in the men's K1 team event. The trio of Simon Oven, Anze Urrankar and Nejc Znidarcic may already have been thinking about their tussle for individual gold later in the week, but were happy to work together as a team on the opening day.

The win continued a remarkable wildwater career for Znidarcic.

"I'm really happy, this is my sixth world title with the team, and I counted yesterday, I have won with 11 different people," he said.

"But this is the first for us as a team. It's a nice beginning for us. It was very easy to paddle with these two, I just followed them down the course."

France finished 0.40 seconds behind in second place, while the Czech Republic picked up the bronze.

66

THIS IS SUCH A HARD COURSE, IT'S REALLY EASY TO MAKE A MISTAKE. SO THIS IS SO NICE TO WIN.



Kaylen Bassett (Australia)

[View athlete bio](#)

Lachlan Bassett (Australia)

[View athlete bio](#)



Phenicia Dupras
(France)

[View athlete bio](#)

RESULTS

[Click here to find out full results](#)

Women's K1

1.	DUPRAS Phenicia (FRA)	1:00.49
2.	PALOUDOVA Anezka (CZE)	1:00.54
3.	DIMOVOVA Barbora (CZE)	1:00.78

Men's C1

1.	LAPOINTE Louis (FRA)	58.02
2.	ROLENC Ondrej (CZE)	58.46
3.	SLANINA Vladimir (CZE)	58.91

Men's K1

1.	ZNIDARCI Nejc (SLO)	53.93
2.	BOUDET Felix (FRA)	53.94
3.	MORET Hugues (FRA)	54.10

Women's C1

1.	SATKOVA Martina (CZE)	1:06.18
2.	PANATO Cecilia (ITA)	1:06.79
3.	GAUBERT Elsa (FRA)	1:06.84

Men's C2

1.	LAPOINTE/DEBRAY (FRA)	57.56
2.	RYGEL/VESELY (CZE)	57.97
3.	SANTAMARIA/DAZEUR (FRA)	57.99

Women's C2

1.	GAUBERT/BEZIAT (FRA)	1:05.80
2.	RICCIARDI/PANATO (ITA)	1:07.82
3.	LUTZ/BARM (GER)	1:07.85

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TOKYO



TOKYO PREVIEWS



FACTS & FIGURES

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Tokyo,
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TOKYO 2020 WILL MAKE CANOEING HISTORY

OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPICS WILL SIGNAL START OF A NEW ERA

In so many ways, Tokyo 2020 will be a significant milestone in the development of canoeing and paracanoeing.

The canoe sprint and canoe slalom programs will be gender equal for the first time; in paracanoe, three new medal events will be added to the program as the sport maintains its position as one of the fastest growing on the Paralympic program.

2020 will mark the 20th official appearance of canoe sprint on the Olympic program. It's a reflection of the sport's endurance and popularity around the world. In Tokyo every continent will be represented, and new events will guarantee new champions will be crowned.

Just four sprint events have been contested at every Olympic Games since the sport's introduction in 1936 – the men's C1 and C2 1000, and the men's K1 and K2 1000. For the first time in Tokyo, women will contest canoe races, with the introduction of the C1 200 and C2 500. The growth in women's canoe in recent years has been phenomenal. From just a handful of countries sharing the medals even three years ago, the 2019 world championships saw the emergence of exciting new prospects. Canada, Hungary, China and Belarus are the top nations, but there is no shortage of athletes from other corners of the globe looking to make their mark.

The men's K4 1000 has been replaced by the K4 500, presenting an opportunity for sprint specialists to join this coveted team boat race. The strongest two countries

“

2020 WILL MARK THE 20TH OFFICIAL APPEARANCE OF CANOE SPRINT ON THE OLYMPIC PROGRAM. IT'S A REFLECTION OF THE SPORT'S ENDURANCE AND POPULARITY AROUND THE WORLD.

in this new race have been Germany and Spain, who have successfully combined their best 200 metre paddlers with their most powerful 1000 metre athletes.

You can expect many of the champions from 2016 will be back in 2020. Lisa Carrington will be trying for a third consecutive K1 200 gold, and in the process keep an unbeaten run that started in 2011 in tact. The New Zealander is also likely to front up for the K1 500, the K4 500 and maybe the K2 500.



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CANOE SLALOM WILL MAKE ITS NINTH OLYMPIC APPEARANCE IN 2020. FOR THE FIRST TIME IT WILL BE GENDER EQUAL, WITH WOMEN'S CANOE REPLACING MEN'S C2.

At one stage there was talk she could go for a record four gold medals at one Games. Just competing in four big events will be hard enough - if she can win them all, she will earn the title of one of the greatest canoe sprint paddlers of all time.

Great Britain's Liam Heath will be back to defend the K1 200, a race that he has dominated since winning gold in Rio. He took a year off in 2018 to focus on the K4 500, but showed no ill effects when he returned in 2019.

Hungary's Danuta Kozak, the star of the 2016 Olympics, was strangely off key at the 2019 world championships. Like Cartington, she will be hoping for a third consecutive Olympic gold in 2020, in the K1 500.

Hungary in the women's K4 500, and Germany in the men's K4 500, will once again be the crews to beat in Tokyo. Their record in the team boats is phenomenal, and their form since Rio has been perfect.

Canoe slalom will make its ninth Olympic appearance in 2020. For the first time it will be gender equal, with women's canoe replacing men's C2.

As we go to print, many of the nations are still in the process of determining who will represent them in Tokyo. For some countries, actually earning the right to race for your country at the Olympics is tougher than the Games themselves.



CLICK HERE TO SEE
TOKYO 2020'S ONE
MINUTE, ONE SPORT
VIDEO ON CANOE
SPRINT AND SLALOM

But getting there will be the toughest part. Slafkovsky, desperate to get to his first Olympics, and Benus are gold medal prospects in their own right.

Defending Olympic champion, Denis Gargaud-Chanot, has struggled through 2019, and headed into the Olympic year with a question mark hanging over whether he would even qualify to represent France. Likewise, the powerful German pairing of Sideris Tasiadis and Franz Anton shocked the paddling world by failing to even win a quota, and will need to do something special at the 2020 European championships to get a ticket to Tokyo.

The race for women's K1 gold in Tokyo is also wide open. Germany's Ricarda Funk and Australia's Jessica Fox have dominated competition since the Rio Olympics, and were two of the first athletes to book their places in Japan. Fox will be lining up for her third Olympics, and will be desperate to break through after winning silver in London and bronze in Rio.

66

PARACANOE, WHICH MADE ITS PARALYMPIC DEBUT IN A BLAZE OF GLORY IN RIO IN 2016, WILL BE BACK FOUR YEARS LATER, BIGGER, STRONGER, AND WITH THREE NEW EVENTS THAT WILL PRESENT NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW ATHLETES TO COMPETE AT THE BIGGEST EVENT IN THE PARACANOE WORLD.

It will be a first Games for Funk, who looks to have overcome the big event nerves that have thwarted her career so far.

Spain's Maialen Chourraut is the defending Olympic champion, and also won bronze in London in 2012. Since Rio she has been consistent without being brilliant, but has the temperament and the ability to put together something special when it matters most.

Logic tells you Jess Fox will start favourite in the new women's event, the C1. The Australian has dominated the race since before Rio, and often finishes more than five seconds ahead of the next best athlete.

But Great Britain's Mallory Franklin, Brazil's Ana Satila and Austria's Nadine Weratschnig have all shown they have incredible speed, and if they can put together a perfect run in Tokyo then the final will be wide open. Throw in Germany's 2019 ICF world champion, Andrea Herzog, who is paddling in the best form of her career, and you have the makings of a fantastic finale.



 [CLICK HERE TO SEE TOKYO 2020'S ONE MINUTE, ONE SPORT VIDEO](#)

Fox and Satila are among a handful of athletes with a chance to make another piece of Olympic history in Tokyo. No athlete, male or female, has ever won two individual golds at a single game. There are only one or two men who do both K1 and C1, but it is much more common among the women paddlers.

Fox has already shown it can be done, winning both the K1 and C1 world titles in 2014 and again in 2018. There is likely to be at least four paddlers who will be in the women's C1 and K1 in Tokyo, with American teenager Evy Leibfarth and New Zealand's Luuka Jones, a K1 silver medalist in Rio, strong chances to join Fox and Satila.

Paracanoe, which made its Paralympic debut in a blaze of glory in Rio in 2016, will be back four years later, bigger, stronger, and with three new events that will present new opportunities for new athletes to compete at the biggest event in the paracanoe world.

Va'a, or outrigger canoe, will make its debut in Tokyo, with three medal events – two for men, one for women – bringing to nine the total number of golds on offer at the Paralympics. For some athletes, like Australia's Curits McGrath, it will provide an opportunity to win two gold medals and create some paracanoe Paralympic history.

Re-classification has made life interesting in the past three years for many competitors. McGrath, a gold medalist in the men's KL2 in Rio, won consecutive VL2 world titles between 2014 and 2017, was then reclassified to VL3, and then won world titles in that category in 2018 and 2019.





Brazil's Luis Cardoso da Silva won four VL1 world titles between 2014 and 2017, was then reclassified to VL2, and became world champion in that category in 2019. Both McGrath and da Silva will fancy their chances of becoming the first ever Paralympic champions in their respective categories, but the rest of the world is closing in fast.

McGrath can expect a tough time from Brazil's Caio Ribeiro de Carvalho, silver medalist at the past three world championships, each time by microscopic margins.

The women's VL2 will give Great Britain's Emma Wiggs another shot at Paralympic glory, having won gold in the KL2 in Rio. While her teammate, Charlotte Henshaw, has beaten her at the past two world championships in the KL2, Wiggs has had more success in the new event.

Wiggs has been struggling with a wrist injury for two seasons, but still managed to give herself a chance for double gold in Tokyo. However, Henshaw, a former Paralympic swimmer, will take a power of beating. She gets stronger every year and is very focussed.

In the KL events, McGrath will look to build on his Rio gold and four consecutive world titles, but Italian Federico Mancarella and New Zealand's Scott Martlew are breathing down his neck.



Luka Bozic
(Slovenia)

[View athlete bio](#)

In the KL3, Ukraine's Serhii Yemelianov has been unbeatable since Rio, where he also won gold. Brazil's Carvalho regularly chases him home at world championship level, but the Ukrainian has always looked comfortable.

Likewise his Ukrainian teammate, Maryna Mazhula, has had the women's KL1 under her control in the lead-up to Tokyo. She won the world title in 2018 and followed up with another gold in 2019, and appears to be getting stronger every year.

The most open races in Tokyo look set to be the women's KL3 and the men's KL1. Since 2016 there have been four different world champions in the women's KL3, the latest Uzbekistan's Shakhnoza Mirzaeva. In 2018 it was Sweden's Helene Ripa, and in 2017 Australia's Amanda Reynolds. All three are expected to be in Tokyo.

In the men's KL1, Hungarian teenager Peter Pal Kiss burst onto the scene in Szeged in 2019, ending the two-year winning streak of Italy's Esteban Farias. Kiss had won the European title earlier in the year, and looks the real deal. But Farias, who took the silver behind Kiss in Hungary, will not go away quietly.

And Luis Cardoso da Silva of Brazil has won world championship bronze at the past four titles and has shown he can match it with the best.

“

THE CANOE SPRINT AND CANOE SLALOM PROGRAMS WILL BE GENDER EQUAL FOR THE FIRST TIME; IN PARACANOE, THREE NEW MEDAL EVENTS WILL BE ADDED TO THE PROGRAM AS THE SPORT MAINTAINS ITS POSITION AS ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING ON THE PARALYMPIC PROGRAM.

TEENAGERS HOLD THEIR NERVE TO BOOK PLACES IN TOKYO

THE CURRENT CROP OF YOUNG PADDLERS IS VERY EXCITING FOR THE FUTURE OF CANOEING

For most teenagers, the pressure of having to earn your country qualification for the Olympic Games may seem quite daunting, but a group of determined stars of tomorrow took it all in their stride in 2019.

Evy Leibfarth, Marta Bertoncelli, Andrea Herzog and Monica Doria Vilarrubla all qualified canoe slalom quotas; Nevin Harrison, Shimeng Yu, Nan wang, Mengya Sun and Jacob Schopf locked away canoe sprint quotas; and Peter Pal Kiss made sure Hungary will be at the Paralympics.

On a weekend of outstanding slalom performances, 19-year-old German Andrea Herzog became world C1 women's champion, 15-year-old Leibfarth continued her incredible debut slalom season by finishing fourth, 19-year-old Doria Vilarrubla finished eighth, and 18-year-old Bertoncelli was 15th.

The results earned their countries, Germany, USA, Andorra and Italy respectively, quotas for next year's Games.

Leibfarth and Doria Vilarrubla also finished high enough in the women's K1 to earn quotas, but will need to relinquish one of those places.

An athlete can only earn a quota for one event, meaning Leibfarth and Doria Vilarrubla joined Australia's Jessica Fox, New Zealand's Luuka Jones and Brazil's Ana Satila in having to relinquish one of their tickets.

However all five athletes will be able to compete in both the C1 and K1 in Tokyo.

"I've been dreaming about competing at this level for a really long time, and getting the Olympic quota spot was really cool," Leibfarth said.

I'VE BEEN DREAMING ABOUT COMPETING AT THIS LEVEL FOR A REALLY LONG TIME, AND GETTING THE OLYMPIC QUOTA SPOT WAS REALLY COOL.

"That's been my really big goal for this season, I've been working towards it. And then getting my head together for this race, and then putting it all together was really good for me."

"I feel like I just dived into everything this year, and I've just been loving the experience. I think a lot of people back home are discovering the sport for the first time, and that's really exciting for me."

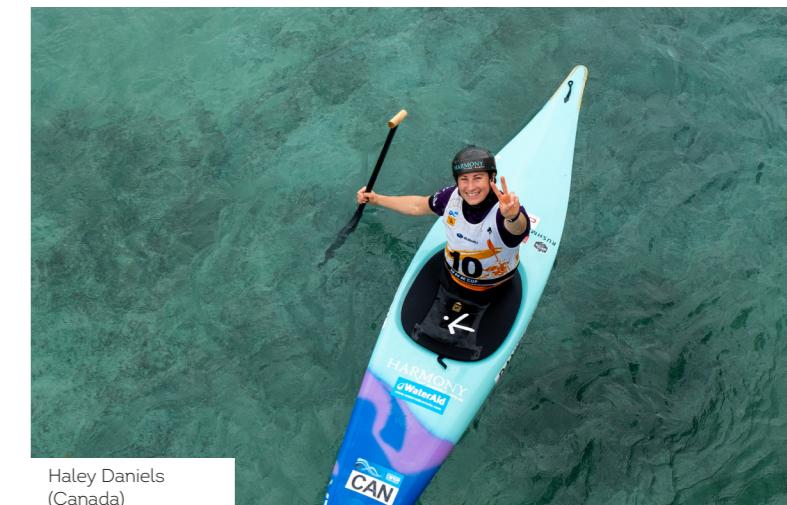
Herzog had a nerve-wracking world championships, having to see off a challenge from teammates Elena Apel and Jasmin Schornberg for Germany's sole Olympic quota. She responded in the best possible fashion, securing her first ever world title.



«I never thought I could be a world champion. I thought I could get the Olympic spot, and I thought I could get a medal, but I never thought it could be the gold medal,» Herzog said.

«It's so great, it's been such a big dream for me. It's been a big fight, but at the end I was the lucky one, and I'm still the lucky one, and hopefully it will be a great Olympics.»

21-year-old Robert Hendrick from Kildare, Ireland, missed making his first C1 men's final by just 0.39 of a second. It would have been an incredible performance, considering he was competing in his first ever semi-final.



Haley Daniels
(Canada)

[View athlete bio](#)

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WE WERE LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, AND I HAD THIS BIG DREAM. AND THEN I CAME HERE AND THOUGHT I WILL TRY MY BEST AND WE WILL SEE, BUT IT WAS A DREAM. WHEN A DREAM COMES TRUE, IT IS UNBELIEVABLE.

But his achievement was good enough to earn Ireland a quota for Tokyo.

"It's great for the sport, we have really over the past few years built up the depth in our paddling in Ireland," Hendrick said.

"It's becoming a real challenge just to make the Irish team now. Irish qualifying is going to be about just putting down the best paddling I can do, and whether that means I get to be on the start line in Tokyo next year, who knows."

"But that's all I can worry about. What the other guys do is outside of my control, so I'm just going to focus on my performance, and whatever will be, will be."

One athlete who already knows she is going to Tokyo next year is Italian teenager Marta Bertoncelli, who earned a quota for the debut of women's C1 at the Olympics.

"It's unbelievable, we went from literally zero to qualifying a spot for the Olympics, I can not believe it," she said.

"We were looking to the future, and I had this big dream. And then I came here and thought I will try my best and we will see, but it was a dream. When a dream comes true, it is unbelievable."



Viktoria Wolffhardt
(Austria)

[View athlete bio](#)



[Click here to see previous Olympic results for canoe Sprint](#)

Nevin Harrison was one of several teenagers who made a name for themselves at the 2019 ICF canoe sprint world championships, the American teenager winning the women's C1 200 to earn her country a ticket for Tokyo.

17-year-old Harrison was barely known even in her own country before winning C1 gold at the Pan American Games, but the American threw herself into medal contention for next year's C1 200 Olympic debut with a stunning gold in Szeged.

"I was going into that final thinking, man I'm just happy to be here, and I never ever felt that a medal was possible, and especially gold," Harrison said.

"Oh my gosh, it's been my dream since I was a little kid to make the Olympics, it's so good to be here."

And then there was 16-year-old Hungarian Peter Pal Kiss, who backed up his shock 2019 European title win with the biggest win of his career, thrilling the home crowd with a stunning gold medal at the ICF Paracanoe World Championships in Szeged on Friday.

The teenager upset two-time Italian world champion Esteban Farias in the men's KL1 final, with Brazil's Luis Cardoso da Silva taking the bronze. He also left the current Paralympic champion in his wake and stamped himself as a gold medal favourite for the Tokyo Paralympics.



"I have only been paddling for three years, this is fantastic," Kiss said.

"It's very good, I'm very happy. This is my best result ever, it's amazing."

It's easy to forget so many of these athletes are still just teenagers. They could be around for many more Olympics to come.

WORLD-CLASS VENUES WILL MAKE FOR INCREDIBLE OLYMPICS

ATHLETES THRILLED WITH FACILITIES AFTER TEST EVENTS

The Tokyo 2020 venues for canoe slalom, canoe sprint and paracanoe have been up and running for a long time now, they've already hosted test events, and they've received an enthusiastic thumbs up from athletes and officials.

The venues are exciting. They are in Tokyo, which is always a bonus, they have good public access, and importantly, they will be legacy venues. Once the Olympic tents have been packed up and moved on, the venues will remain.

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THE VENUES ARE EXCITING. THEY ARE IN TOKYO, WHICH IS ALWAYS A BONUS, THEY HAVE GOOD PUBLIC ACCESS, AND IMPORTANTLY, THEY WILL BE LEGACY VENUES. ONCE THE OLYMPIC TENTS HAVE BEEN PACKED UP AND MOVED ON, THE VENUES WILL REMAIN.

The Canoe Slalom Course is the first manmade course in Japan and has been constructed on land adjoining the Kasai Rinkai Park. The competition course is approximately 200 metres long; there is also a warm-up course and a finishing pool.

Temporary seating will be available during the Games, allowing the centre to host up to 7,500 spectators. There will be six days of competitions in four events: kayak (K-1) men and women as well as canoe single (C-1) men and women.

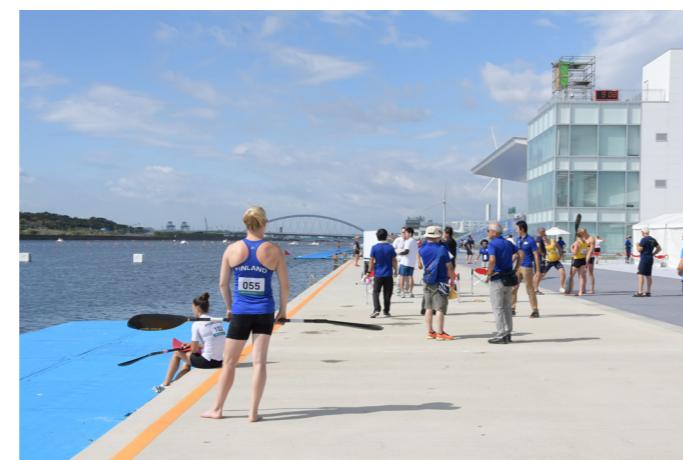
«It has been very impressive watching the development of the Kasai Canoe Slalom Centre, and now we see a world-class venue which will host the planet's best paddlers at next year's Tokyo 2020 Olympics,» International Canoe Federation President Jose Perurena said at the opening of the course.

[Click here to see previous Olympic results for canoe Slalom](#)



Ricarda Funk (Germany)

[View athlete bio](#)



«It is not just the slalom course which is incredible. The effort that has been made to ensure the best possible experience for spectators and media is also second-to-none, which will guarantee a memorable Games for all involved.

«On behalf of the International Canoe Federation, I congratulate all who have been part of the development of this fantastic venue. And I know I speak on behalf of the entire canoeing community when I say we cannot wait to showcase our sport at the Kasai Canoe Slalom Centre. It is sure to be one of our greatest Olympic venues ever.»

For the record, the first athlete on the water at the Kasai whitewater stadium was former Japanese team member, Asahi Yamada, who is now working for the Tokyo 2020 organising committee as part of the canoe slalom sports team.



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WE ARE CONFIDENT IN THE COMING MONTHS FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE VENUE WILL MAKE IT ONE OF THE BEST EVER, OFFERING A UNIQUE OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE TO OUR ATHLETES AND SPONSORS.

"The water is really nice, and the top of the course is really hard," Yamada said.

"There are many drops and waves, so I think it will be a really good course. We will do some fine tuning, so by the time of the Games, it will be amazing."

The International Canoe Federation is thrilled with the venue.

"We could not be happier. We have a venue that is ready to be paddled on, and meets all of our requirements," ICF canoe slalom technical committee chair, Jean-Michel Prono, said.

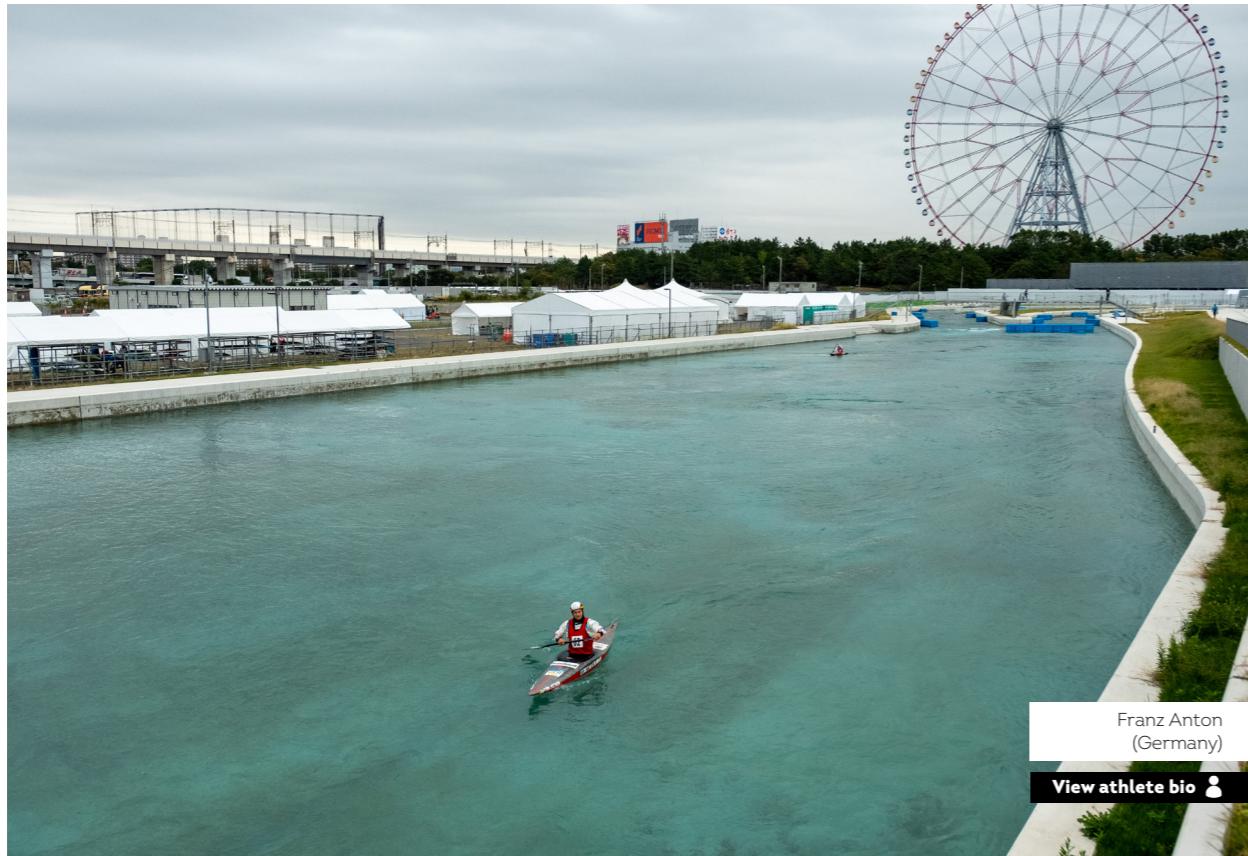
"We are confident in the coming months further development of the venue will make it one of the best ever, offering a unique Olympic experience to our athletes and sponsors."

Canoe Sprint will be contested at the Sea Forest Waterway, in the Tokyo Bay area and just 15 minutes from the Games village. The venue will remain after the Olympics, providing an excellent canoe legacy for generations to come.

Constructed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government on a waterfront site, which is also located close to central Tokyo, the venue will offer stunning views of the Tokyo Bay and the Tokyo Gate Bridge to athletes, spectators and broadcasters alike.

The field of play is protected from the effect of waves, currents and tides by wave absorbers, two dams and water gates. The venue also includes start facilities, a finish tower, a timing hut, a boathouse, pontoons and a 2,000-seat grandstand. Additional temporary seating and standing areas will be available during the Games so that the Sea Forest Waterway can host up to 16,000 spectators.

The facility is designed to be accessible to all, including older people, people with impairments, parents with infant



Franz Anton
(Germany)

[View athlete bio](#)



Emma Wiggs
(Great Britain)

[View athlete bio](#)

strollers and those with guide dogs. It has universally-designed toilets and wheelchair-accessible seats in areas designed with enough height difference between the rows of seating to ensure that those in wheelchairs can see clearly, even if spectators in front of them stand up.

The venue also has solar panels and other state-of-the-art technology to help reduce the facility's carbon footprint.

Athletes had the chance to test the venue for themselves last year, and came away impressed.

"It's awesome. It's a wicked venue, from the boatsheds to the water to the professionalism," New Zealand's two-time Olympic gold medalist, Lisa Carrington, said.

"The course itself is really good. The venue feels really good, it's salt water which feels really nice."

Five-time German Olympian, Ronald Rauhe, knows better than anyone what makes a good Olympic canoe sprint venue.

"It's going to be pretty special because it's so well organised and there is a special spirit here," he said.

"It's different to see the ocean next to the course, so we hope that it won't be too windy. There are a lot of fish, jellyfish as well, so we are not alone on the water."



Curtis McGrath will be chasing two paracanoe gold medals for Australia at the Tokyo Paralympics.

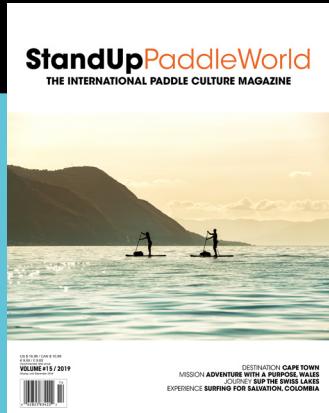
"The venue is really cool," he said.

"It's been built very well, it's really big, so the facilities are really spacious. The wind is a bit of an issue, but everyone is in the same situation, so there's going to be some tough racing."

[Click here to see more on the paralympics and paracanoe](#)

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