

Southern hemisphere dominate in France

Ocean Racing World Championships

South Africa's Sean Rice won an emotional second ocean racing world title and New Zealand's Danielle McKenzie caused a major boilder to win the women's final at her first world championships on an exciting day of racing in Saint-Pierre de Quiberon, France.



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 this time.

He finished the 22 kilometre course 38 seconds ahead of his younger brother, Kenny, with Australia's Hill a further 14 seconds back in 3rd.

'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 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.'

The 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 team mate Teneale Hatton was 3rd.

McKenzie had already competed in top level competitions in both surfski and triathlon before turning her hand to ocean racing.

'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.

ICF

SSWU23: 1 J Smith, Australia, 1:44:30.76. 2 B Massie, Australia, 1:47:48.47.

3 K Purchase, S Africa, 1:49:53.61. 15 A Bray, GB, 2:04:11.30. 17 B Wesley, GB, 2:12:24.78.

SSW: 1 D McKenzie, NZ, 1:41:29.92. 2 H Nixon, S Africa, 1:42:42.53.

3 T Hatton, NZ, 1:43:58.10. 16 R Newson, GB, 1:54:02.08.

SSMJ: 1 U Hart, S Africa, 1:34:03.41. 2 J Enriquez Gutierrez, España, 1:38:21.03.

3 M Fenn, S Africa, 1:38:38.07. 14 P Phillips, GB, 1:46:40.20. 17 F Dungavel, GB, 1:48:49.27.

SSMU23: 1 J Fenn, S Africa, 1:32:36.21. 2 H Henot, France, 1:33:47.16.

3 N Havard, Australia, 1:35:29.90. 9 R Lark, GB, 1:39:11.10.

SSM: 1 S Rice, S Africa, 1:27:44.99. 2 K Rice, S Africa, 1:28:22.25.

3 C Hill, Australia, 1:28:37.64.



McKenzie and Rice at St-Pierre de Quiberon.



Bronze for Broughton

World Championships

The 12 times marathon world champion Hank McGregor was on his way home from the 2019 world titles in Shaoxing, China, having failed to recover from a virus in time for the week's event.

Team leader Graham Neate said the South African squad had been left 'devastated' by McGregor's withdrawal but the 41 year old was left with no choice.

'Hank's gutted; he really is devastated,' Neate said.

'You can see he's having this internal fight because he was going to do three races. I think in his mind he was down to two, to see if he could recover. We obviously needed to see if we could get a replacement for him but we didn't want to put him under pressure to make his decision.

'He really wanted to do it. He's a really passionate person, very proud, and I really felt for him. He came to me yesterday afternoon and said his body was in really bad shape, he was in a lot of pain and he had medical advice so it would have been foolish to paddle.'

Neate said McGregor was diagnosed with shingles, a viral infection that can cause a painful rash. He was entered in the short course, marathon and K2 race. The team was hoping to rush Nick Notten from South Africa to China to team up with Andy Birkett for the men's K2 and to contest the K1.

Notten finished 3rd behind Birkett and McGregor in the South African team trials and would be considered an outside medal prospect, despite the late callup.

'I tried to give Hank a bit of space yesterday but he looked absolutely devastated,' Neate said.

'He's had a big year. He won the Molokai and he's got a surfski World Cup coming up in South Africa in a couple of week's time which I don't know if he is going to be able to do but Hank's a true competitor; he would just race at every opportunity. He's gutted.'

McGregor momentarily retired from K1 racing last year but was talked into returning for this year's world championships. Neate said he expects the seven time individual world champion will now set his sights on next year's world titles.

'You never write Hank off. As long as his body will co-operate he'll be there, absolutely.'

Reigning world champion Vanda Kiszli led a gold medal charge for Hungary while there were also triumphs for Denmark, Ukraine, Spain and France on the opening day of the world championships.

Kiszli would defend her marathon title at the weekend and on Thursday 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 marathon with gold in the men's K1 short race, Ukraine's Liudmyla Babak added a short race C1 title to her two long distance marathon titles and Spain's Diego Romero added a men's C1 short race to his C2 world title from 2018.

Denmark's Nikolai Thomsen and Philip Knudsen quinnellaed the