

British junior men's kayak team bounce back

U23/Junior World Championships

France dominated the opening day of the 2019 junior and U23 canoe slalom world championships, winning four gold medals in a powerful display of paddling across all disciplines.

France won the women's junior and U23 K1 team events and also the men's junior C1 team event in a dominant morning for team Les Bleus and then picked up the men's U23 K1 team in the afternoon.

Italy also picked up two gold medals on the opening day, courtesy of their U23 men's C1 team and their women's junior C1 team.

There were also gold medals for the Czech Republic and Great Britain.

The women's U23 K1 team of cousins Camille and Romane Prigent and Marjorie Delassus had 2.43 seconds to spare over the Czech Republic with Germany a further second back in 3rd. One week earlier a 50 second penalty had denied them a medal at the European championships.

'It feels good; we weren't so happy at the end because we thought we had made some little mistake but when we came back and saw 1st still on the screen we were so happy,' Camille Prigent said.

'It gives you confidence and we share the happiness so it's even nicer than individual wins.'

The men's U23 K1 team of Mathurin Madore, Malo Quemeneur and Pol Oulhen originally crossed the finish line in 2nd place but then had a two second penalty removed to leapfrog them ahead of Slovenia with Spain taking the bronze.

'When we arrived we had four penalties and we knew we had only two so we just had to wait five minutes but we knew we had won the race,' Madore said.

France's junior women's K1 team included 2018 Youth Olympic Games gold and silver medallists Doriane Delassus, Emma Vuitton and Eva Pietracha. They finished just 0.80 second ahead of the Czech Republic with Great Britain taking the bronze medal.

'We were really on fire on the water,' Pietracha, competing at her first world championships, said.

'I was a little nervous but we did the European championships last week and I was more nervous then.'

The third morning medal for France came courtesy of Yohann Senechault, Adrien Fischer and Hector Combes in the men's junior canoe team final.

'It was a pretty good run; we did not have a lot of penalties,' Combes said.

'A week ago we finished 4th at the European championships and we wanted to do better today. We are very happy.'

France finished 0.90 second ahead of Germany with Great Britain again taking the bronze.

The first gold medal of the world championships went to the Italian men's U23 C1 team of Raffaello Ivaldi, Paolo Ceccon and Flavio Micozzi. They finished 1.82 second clear of Slovakia with the Czech Republic another 0.02 second behind in 3rd.

'We won the Europeans last week so we're happy we were able to repeat our run,' Ivaldi said.

'We were strong today; we've grown a lot this year and the team has changed since last year.'

'Three years ago all the staff in Italy changed and we started a new project. Everybody moved to Ivrea to train; we have coaches in Ivrea. We can all stay in Ivrea and everyone in the team is good friends. We can see the results from the past three years.'

The change in Italian canoeing was further underlined by the junior women's C1 team of Marta Bertocelli, Elena Borghi and Elena Micozzi's winning. They beat Slovakia by a massive 9.22 seconds with the Czech Republic another second back in 3rd.

One week earlier the same team won the European title in Slovenia.

'It's crazy; we can't believe it. Last year was kind of disappointing but in the winter we trained together and we've grown up a lot,' Bertocelli said.

'It makes a big difference being able to train together because we are not just together in the water; we are also together out of the water. The C1 women in Italy was nothing before us so this is really unbelievable.'

Gold in the women's U23 C1 team competition went to the strong Czech team of Tereza Fiserova, Eva Rihova and Martina Satkova, finishing 3.54 seconds ahead of France with Australia more than seven seconds further back in 3rd.

'I think we had a really good run; we were clean and I think that was the most important thing, to be clean and to go fast. We did it all,' Satkova said.

'Three years ago we did the world championships here and the European championships so we have been the same team so I think it's been a good experience for us.'

The final gold medal of the day was won by Great Britain, with Jonny Dickson, Ben Haylett and Etienne Chappell winning the men's junior K1 team event ahead of the Czech Republic and Germany.

The team had to bounce back after a disappointing result at the European championships.

'We took the confidence from training here,' Haylett said.

'We've been here about three weeks now so we know where we're going. We just thought we would build off that and take the positives when they came.'

Czech paddlers flexed their muscles on the second day of the championships in Poland, qualifying quickest in three of the four events contested and winning the only gold medal on offer.

Tereza Kneblova and Martin Kratochvil finished a massive 9.58 seconds ahead of Czech team mates Daniel Urban and Ivana Klobouckova with Zuzanna Kulig and Kacper Zachwieja taking Poland's first medal by finishing 3rd.

'I can't describe it. I am very happy,' Kratochvil said.

'It's been a great start for Czech Republic here. I hope everyone else can do the same.'

It is amazing for me. I can't believe it,' Kneblova said.

'Of course we were very nervous. We just kept telling each other it would be okay.'

Spain's David Llorente finished top of the table in the men's U23 K1 but he was the only competitor to withstand the Czech onslaught at the Kolna slalom course.

Defending men's C1 U23 world champion Vaclav Chaloupka was impressive in setting an error free 95.23 run, edging out home town favourite Kacper Sztuba in 96.48 with Australia's Tristan Carter third fastest in 97.44.

'The top part was not that good but the bottom part was really good but I was quite surprised that I qualified first,' Chaloupka said.

'Because I didn't make the senior team this year this event is my goal for the season and I'm defending the title so it's a good start for me.'

As 2019 European champion Amalie Hilgertova again showed what she is capable of, setting a penalty free time of 100.60 to qualify quickest in the women's U23 K1.

The Czech finished ahead of Slovakia's Eliska Mintalova on 101.47 with defending U23 world champion Camille Prigent third quickest on 102.94.

'I was a bit stressed before my run because I didn't watch the time properly and I had ten minutes less than I wanted to before the run,' Hilgertova said, 'So I was a bit stressed out but the run was quite good I think. Some of the gates were a bit tricky but I handled it well.'

'I usually work well under pressure so that's good.'

The much anticipated U23 C1 women's battle between Tereza Fiserova and Brazil's Ana Satila lived up to the hype with Fiserova finishing the qualifying run just 0.29 second ahead of the two time Olympian with both picking up 2 second penalties.

'I felt good. I think that my run was good,' Fiserova said.

'I think it was faster than my K1 run. I feel strong. I do the K1 to train for the C1 and I think it's helping a lot. In C1 you only paddle on one side but in K1 its both, which helps my canoe.'



Junior K1 winner Delassus.



U23 winner Hilgertova.



Maimistov of Russia.



U23 C1 winner Gestin.