

# Johnson third over short course

## Ruse Marathon

Denmark's Mads Pedersen finally turned the tables on South African rival Andy Birkett and Hungarian Vanda Kiszli added another title to her impressive career on the final day of the marathon World Cup in Ruse, Bulgaria.



Ukraine's Liudmyla Babak confirmed once again she is unbeatable in the women's canoe competition while Hungary's Marton Kover won a hard fought men's C1 final.

In 2022 Andy Birkett had two significant victories over two time world champion Pedersen, beating him at the debut of canoe marathon at the World Games in Birmingham and then taking the world championship crown from him in Portugal.

On the Sunday Pedersen was leaving nothing to chance, refusing to be run down over the closing stages of the Ruse World Cup. Portugal's José Ramalho, a three time world championship silver medallist, took another second place with Birkett finishing third.

Kiszli has rarely been beaten since she won her first women's K1 world title in 2018, adding last year's World Games gold medal to an already bulging trophy cabinet. On Sunday in Ruse she was once again

too strong, finishing more than eight seconds clear of team mate Panna Csepe with Denmark's Pernille Hostrup third.

There was also a reversal in the finish table in the men's C1 with four time world champion Marton Kover outlasting Portugal's reigning world champion, Manuel Garrido, for the gold.

Ukraine's Denys Davydov was third.

Like Kiszli, Liudmyla Babak has dominated her canoe marathon class for several seasons. She was at her best again on Sunday in the women's C1, defeating team mate Olena Tsyhankova and Germany's Annette Wehrmann.

Germany's Hjordis Sommer won the women's K1 junior title, Ireland's Ben Higgins the men's junior K1 and Ukrainians Danylo Melnychuk and Olesia Lem the junior men's and women's C1 titles.

## ICF

**K1Wsh:** 1 V Kiszli, Magyarország, 16:03.28. 2 P Hostrup, Danmark, 16:24.66. 3 M Johnson, GB, 16:25.10. 8 S Martyn, GB, 17:02.23. 9 R Solway, GB, 17:25.09. 12 K Brookes, GB, 17:51.06. 13 L Guest, GB, 17:52.26.

**K1Msh:** 1 M Pedersen, Danmark, 13:39.64. 2 J Ramalho, Portugal, 13:58.47. 3 M Fenn, S Africa, 14:21.00. 6 F Cadell, GB, 15:01.97. 7 J Petersen, GB, 15:02.41. 10 A McIntyre, GB, 15:15.66. 12 R McMullen, GB, 15:27.59. 16 G Durden, GB, 16:06.58.

**K1W:** 1 V Kiszli, Magyarország, 1:39:41.13. 2 P Csepe, Magyarország, 1:39:49.80. 3 P Hostrup, Danmark, 1:43:09.20. 4 S Martyn, GB, 1:43:16.11. 8 M Johnson, GB, 1:46:30.57. 9 R Solway, GB, 1:46:31.77. 11 L Guest, GB, 1:48:15.95.

**K1M:** 1 M Pedersen, Danmark, 1:41:06.23. 2 J Ramalho, Portugal, 1:41:14.56. 3 A Birkett, S Africa, 1:41:28.02. 6 A McIntyre, GB, 1:44:05.10. 9 R McMullen, GB, 1:46:15.64. 12 J Petersen, GB, 1:46:56.20. 15 F Cadell, GB, 1:49:10.25. 16 G Durden, GB, 1:49:24.38.



ICF photographs

# Seeking quality and quantity

## National Championships

With Saturday turning showery and an increasing wind blowing down the river, Norwich again faced tough conditions, as it had in 2019, but avoided the thunderstorms that affected much of the rest of the country. Another issue was an arts festival which had first call on the carparks but, as these had narrowed gateways and would not accept payment by cash or cards, the field hired for paddlers for the weekend was much more user friendly. The host club had all their friends and relations present on and off the water for an excellent event in the conditions.



A change to the course this year was an extra turn buoy on the River Wensum some 100m upstream of the confluence with the River Yare. This stopped paddlers cutting the corner on the approach to the portage in front of the clubhouse, introducing a couple of tight turns. It did not apply, of course, to the first batch of starters, those over 54 or under 14 in kayaks and the under 18 C1s, who only raced one 6.5km lap with no portages.

Perhaps the tightest finish was in the over 59 men, where Neil Blackman and Kevin Smith had a dead heat with Stan Missen just a second behind them, timing to the nearest second.

Richmond's under 18 C1s, Owen Chisholm, Areg Sarkisyan and Andrew Elliot, finished in that order, well separated, these being the only canoe appearance in the whole event, no seniors, no women, no C2s.

It was a different story for the senior kayaks, the men soon establishing a lead group of seven, from which James Russell and Charlie Smith broke away, Russell just getting his nose over the line first in the final sprint, the pair having to wait the better part of 4 minutes for Matthew Johnson, the next arrival.

The under 23 men also established a lead group of seven which broke up to see Luke Shaw win by 7 seconds from Alex McIntyre then a gap of 1 min 40 secs to Timothy Dowden.

The under 18 boys' win went to Joseph Enoch from Arthur Morley with Sam Cribbett the only other racer in sight.

William Short had a safe win in boys under 16 but Toby Bullock took second place after a hard sprint against Olivier Mazur.

Melissa Johnson took the women's K1 from Fay Lamph after the two had paddled the race together but Leah Faltrick was 22 minutes behind them in third place, there being only four entrants for this major class in the national championships.

The under 23 women did at least reach 10 starters, Samantha Martyn winning by a minute from Freya Peters, the finishers including WW racers Kerry and Emma Christie.

Isla Bethune won the under 18s by a couple of minutes from Sienna Payne in a class with a similar entry.

Kamila Sklenarova won the under 16 girls where the close race, as for the boys, was for second place, which Dianora De Bilio took from Frankie Scrivener by 3 seconds.

Conditions relented somewhat for Sunday's doubles events. The wind eased a bit and there were sunny intervals. The racing began again with classes for more senior and younger age groups. The over 54s produced close racing, the men with Smith/Treadgold, the Blackman brothers and Hayward/Pendle home in that order at one second intervals. The



*Sarkisyan, Elliot and Chisholm.*



*Cribbett, Barritt, Morley and Enoch in under 18s.*