



Damiano Bendetto photographs

Camille Prigent put down a fast qualifying time.

newest Olympic sport, which will make its Games debut next year and they did not leave disappointed, with action aplenty and a gold medal for Neveu in the final.

'Today was a good day, finally,' Neveu said. 'Today the crowd was just crazy and they pushed me on each run. It was my last chance of the season and I didn't miss it so it's a perfect day finally because to win at home it is quite special and it's very good for me.'

New Zealand's Finn Butcher took silver and Austria's Felix Oschmautz the bronze.

It was a big day for Team New Zealand with Jones displaying perfect kayak cross technique throughout the lead up races and holding that form to defeat Great Britain's Kimberley Woods and Jessica Fox.

Incredibly it was the first ever World Cup gold medal for Jones in a career which has spanned five Olympic cycles. It also comes after missing most of the 2022 season with Covid related illness.

'I've waited a long time for this but it feels good,' Jones said. 'It's my first World Cup gold in over ten years of racing and I think, considering the year I had last year, it's been amazing. I didn't expect it, to be honest. I just went through the rounds and I had a really good plan so I guess it just happened.'

'I feel healthy now and, if anything, I'm just grateful to be back and grateful to be healthy. It feels quite surreal because I didn't want to focus on trying to make five Olympics. I just wanted to perform at the world championships. If anyone had told me this when I was young I wouldn't have believed them.'

The silver medal for Woods allowed her to leapfrog Italy's Stefanie Horn to take the overall World Cup title for 2023, to add to the world championship gold of the previous month.

'It's been such a long season, so to come away with this shows the consistency I've had and when I'm in the final I'm really out there to go and get them, so, to be world champion this year and overall World Cup winner, I'm really excited for next year,' Woods said.

'This is so my personality. I'm very aggressive, I love it and it's



very instinctive. You never know what's going to happen and I love it. Sometimes it doesn't work; sometimes it does. Thankfully, it's been working for me so far.'

Jones jumped from ninth into overall second with her win on Sunday while Jessica Fox added a fifth medal to her collection from the weekend by finishing third overall in the women's kayak cross.

In the men's overall standings world champion Joe Clarke held on to the number one spot despite not making Sunday's final.

'Obviously I would have liked to fight it out in that final and challenge for another medal to show the class that I've had this season in kayak cross but it wasn't to be this time,' Clarke said, 'but to still win the overall title shows the level I've had throughout the season in the other World Cups.'

'It's the fight I think, not wanting to be beaten. I'm so competitive. In slalom its you versus the course but for this its you versus somebody else so just seeing someone there makes you push that little bit harder.'

Neveu jumped from outside the top ten into second place overall while Australia's Tim Anderson finished third.

ICF

K1W: 1 J Fox, Australia, 100.78. 2 C Kuhnle, Österreich, 102.37. 3 K Zwolinska, Polska, 102.73.

12 K Woods, GB. 17 M Franklin, GB.

K1M: 1 T Castryck, France, 89.20. 2 J Dickson, GB, 91.78. V Prindis, Czechia, 91.78.

14 C Bowers, GB. 16 J Clarke, GB.

C1W: 1 J Fox, Australia, 106.04. 2 G Satkova, Czechia, 110.08. 3 M Franklin, GB, 111.97.

5 K Woods, GB, 113.64. 18 E Miller, GB.

C1M: 1 R Ivaldi, Italia, 95.50. 2 F Anton, Deutschland, 96.18. 3 M Trave, España, 96.83.

10 A Burgess, GB, 102.40. 17 R Wesley, GB.

K1XW: 1 L Jones, NZ. 2 K Woods, GB. 3 J Fox, Australia.

K1XM: 1 B Neveu, France. 2 F Butcher, NZ. 3 F Oschmautz, Österreich.



Floods in August caused severe damage to the slalom course at Tacen. Other than a few small items that were rescued, the site has been swept clear of everything, grandstands, offices, warehouse of clothing, technical equipment, federal archive, LED scoreboard, bridge, course support structure, everything. Damage has been put at over E1,000,000 at a time when expensive flood damage has taken place across Slovenia. The River Sava peaked at 1,800m³/sec. Surprisingly, a local resident advises me that she thinks the European championships will still go ahead there in May.

The latest artificial slalom course is Montgomery Whitewater in Alabama. It has a 490m Olympic course and 670m creek channel plus hiking and biking trails, zip lines, climbing areas and ropes course. There is also a conference centre and festivals are already being hosted.

