

Clarke takes bronze

Pau Slalom

Camille Prigent, Joseph Clarke, Martina Satkova and Miquel Trave showed the best runs in the heats of the final slalom World Cup of the 2021 season at the Pau-Pyrénées Whitewater Stadium.

France's Prigent family led the way in women's kayak heats. The 23 year old Camille Prigent set the fastest time of the day in this event, stopping the clock 1.37 seconds faster than Slovenian Ursa Kragelj.

Romane Prigent finished third in the heats, less than a second and a half behind her cousin, Camille. Romane was on the podium of last year's World Cup race in Pau, finishing second at the time, behind her team mate Marie-Zélia Lafont.

In the men's kayak heats the 2016 Olympic champion Joseph Clarke produced a fastest and penalty free run which brought him the last starting position in Saturday's semi final.

The British paddler, who had recently married his longtime girlfriend, was 0.32 second faster than Italian Giovanni De Gennaro, while Spanish kayak paddler David Llorente finished third, 0.41 second behind Clarke.

'I am trying out the new boat, which I already tried this week. It's nice to put it down in the first run,' Clarke said.

'It is a tough course out there, a lot to think about. To take the lead in the qualifications is always nice.

'Obviously, I would like to make the final and then try to push for a medal.'

In the afternoon's canoe heats the Czech Republic's Martina Satkova finished first in the women's event, ahead of Nuria Vilarrubla (Spain) and Australian Jessica Fox.

The Olympic champion was once again very fast on the course but Fox picked up four penalty seconds on her way, which resulted in the third place after the first stage.

Miquel Trave, the winner of the World Cup the previous weekend in La Seu d'Urgell, continued his strong form on Friday. The Spanish canoeist produced the best run in the men's canoe heats and was a little more than half a second faster than Germany's Franz Anton, who also stood on the podium the previous week. Slovenia's Luka Bozic finished third in the heats.

Kayak paddlers Jessica Fox and Vit Prindis finished the World Cup season in style, both winning not only in Pau but also the overall World Cup series titles.

Fox continued her incredible form in the second part of the World Cup season. She had won the previous week in La Seu d'Urgell both in kayak and the canoe events and continued her winning streak on Saturday with a win in the women's kayak final but it was a tighter final this time as the Australian finished 0.72 second ahead of Czech Katerina Minarik Kudejova and 1.54 seconds ahead of Ursa Kragelj.

Fox also won the overall World Cup series in women's kayak, ahead of Luuka Jones from New Zealand and Eva Tercej from Slovenia.

'It is an amazing feeling to come out here today, to have some spectators. We haven't had them all season; it was really special to be racing and to win. I am thrilled,' Fox said.

'The whole bottom section was really challenging; it's where I made a mistake on that run so I really gave everything I had. I had no arms left at the finish. I couldn't even see the time at the finish line.'



Jennifer Fox won the women's K1.



Vit Prindis, men's K1 winner.



Joe Clarke, placed third.

Vit Prindis is another kayak paddler who has been unstoppable in the second part of the season. The 32 year old Czech won his second World Cup this season after being the best the previous week in Spain.

In addition, he won the extreme World Cup slalom in Prague and finished second in extreme slalom in Markkleeberg. He also won the European champion title in the first part of the season.

The win in Pau was the seventh canoe slalom World Cup win for Prindis. He was half a second faster than Slovenian Peter Kauzer, who celebrated his 38th birthday in Pau. Joseph Clarke was third, 1.25 seconds behind Prindis.

Prindis won the overall World Cup series with a total of 263 points. Kauzer was second in the overall standings with 239 points and Giovanni De Gennaro was third with 220 points.

'I was a little bit worried in the first left up because I was too long there. I lost a lot of time there. I said to myself I need to cut it more so I cut the next few ups which was really good. Then I slowed down, took it easier. I did not do many mistakes,' Prindis said.

'I was in the flow, which was good, and I am really happy with the result.

'It's a special feeling. I think it's a fourth year in a row that a Czech kayaker is the overall winner so it is amazing. I am happy I proved again I am one of the best kayakers, which is important for me.'

Czech canoeist Tereza Fiserova finally found the chink in the armour of Olympic champion Jessica Fox to win the C1 and the overall 2021 season title while 2016 Rio gold medalist Denis Gargaud Chanut thrilled the home crowd with a win in the men's C1.

The 23 year old Fiserova could not believe she won her first ever World Cup slalom after a run of four silver and three bronze medals in C1.

Fox was very fast on the course but four penalty seconds cost her the win. At the end Fox was 1.45 seconds behind Fiserova in second place with German Elena Apel third.

'It is really amazing. I cannot understand this is possible. I am really happy. It is everything,' Fiserova said.

'I am very nervous before my start but in the finish I crossed fingers for Jessica and the other girls because I wish podium for other girls.'

The win in Pau, where double World Cup points were awarded, also meant Fiserova won the overall World Cup standings. She ended the season four points ahead of Fox and Apel was third.