



Martin Fuksa in C1.



Adam Varga, 1km winner.

Less windy than last year

Poznan Regatta

The opening day of the World Cup passed without incident with all pre event favourites safely progressing to the weekend's action in Poznan, Poland.

For many, the Poznan World Cup, the second of the 2023 season, would be the final chance to have a major hitout before the world championships and Olympic qualifiers in Duisburg, Germany, in August.

A strong tail wind added to the challenge on Friday but it was nothing in comparison to the strong winds and storms that had buffeted the same course in 2022. On that occasion organizers had to cancel an afternoon of racing because the conditions were considered too dangerous.

Among those to progress on Friday was two time Olympian and five time world championships C1 1,000 silver medallist, Martin Fuksa. The Czech had competed in only the C2 500 at the opening World Cup but returned to the C1 Olympic distance with a comfortable heat.

'This year my main focus is on the world championships, so resting and training, and we will do our best in August,' Fuksa said.

'This was just the first heat so I hope to get better and better so that I will be at my best in August. I feel good now but I hope I will feel better.'

One of the most anticipated races of the weekend would be the men's K1 1,000 with Hungary's Olympic gold and silver medallists, Balint Kopasz and Adam Varga, once again going head to head in what would also be a selection race for the Hungarian world championship team.



Both Kopasz and Varga comfortably won their heats on Friday with Kopasz confident he could turn the tables on his younger team mate after losing out in the first selection race.

'There is no pressure for me. I am strong mentally, better than physically, but it's no problem. I think it is more important that I am mentally strong,' Kopasz said.

There were few surprises in the early rounds of the women's K1 500. Among those to win their heats was former Czech wildwater paddler Anezka Paloudova who said she was trying to put out of her mind the thought of qualifying for the Paris Olympics.

'I started as a wildwater paddler so I never expected that I would be able to fight for the Olympics so I think my expectations are at a different level to all the other athletes,' Paloudova said.

'I haven't grown with a dream of the Olympic Games. I grew up with the goal of just having fun around paddling so I'm trying to keep this mindset but of course I would love to race at the Olympics.'

Also through to the women's K1 500 semi finals was Slovenia's Spela Janic.

'I'm really enjoying paddling and training at the moment but I hope I can improve further for the world championships,' Janic said.

'I wasn't really happy with my results in Szeged because it was my first race and I didn't really focus but my main goal this year is Duisburg and qualifying for the Olympics.'

Ukraine picked up two gold medals on its return to international canoe sprint racing in 2023 and Adam Varga confirmed that already he is a redhot favourite to take Olympic gold in Paris next year after the opening day of finals.



The Ukrainian men's K4.