



*The Hungarian women's K4 in the rain.*



*Sun/Xu.*



*Isaquias dos Santos.*

ICF photographs

very good form'. Kozak, a teammate of Csipes in the winning women's K4 500 in Rio, finished fourth.

Emma Jorgensen, who joked after taking silver behind Carrington in the 200 that she hoped the New Zealander would retire soon, picked up the bronze to go with the 500 silver she won in Rio.

If Carrington started to feel the pressure of a long week in the sweltering heat she was not showing it and she wouldn't even acknowledge she was starting to feel tired, instead expressing her enthusiasm for her final event starting on Friday.

'The week has been pretty amazing so far and I'm super excited to get out there and race with my team mates,' Carrington said.

'It's pretty amazing to be at this point and to have done what I've done. I'm just relishing this moment and then I close it up and move onto the next thing.'

Of the four events on Carrington's calendar this week, the 500 loomed as one of the more difficult. Coming after the K1 200 and K2 500 and with two time Olympic champion Danuta Kozak in the field, it was always likely to be tough, even for the reigning world champion but Carrington had prepared for this week in the most minute detail.

'It's an incredibly tough event, the 500,' she said.

'It just requires so much physicality and strategy so it's a tough race. I knew that if I could just put my best foot forward I'd have a good chance today.

Of the history? 'It's unreal. It's not something you ever dream of doing, especially coming from New Zealand. It's just been amazing to be able to pave the way,' she said.

'Growing up, to be an Olympian was the epitome of who you wanted to be; it represented so many good values. I think for me it was something I never thought I would be able to do. I've just taken it as I've gone through my career.

'It's amazing. I'm just proud of where I've come from.'

Carrington also took time out to praise Kozak, for so long a fierce rival in both single and team boats and who set the standard with three gold medals in Rio.

'I think she is an incredible athlete; she's been so dominant for such a long period of time,' Carrington said.

'I have the utmost respect for her and what she has been able to achieve over the past three Olympics now.

'Hungary is such a dominant force on the water so it's really cool to be able to be alongside them.'

That rivalry would continue, perhaps for the last time, in the women's K4 500 starting on Friday.

The penultimate day of competition brought mixed results for the medal favourites at the Sea Forest Waterway with the women's C2 making its Games debut.

Two time C1 1,000 Olympic champion Sebastian Brendel was one of those to struggle in the heat, the German needing to race twice to book a berth in Saturday's semi finals.

The Canadian women's C2 combination of Laurence Vincent-Lapointe and Katie Vincent also had to race twice to progress, the four time world champions beaten into third in their heat.

Chinese world champions Mengya Sun and Shixiao Xu were the fastest qualifiers in the women's C2 500 but were not giving too much away when asked how China was so strong in canoe.

'It's a secret,' Sun said.

'Maybe after the final we will tell you.'

'We feel really lucky to be here in the first Olympics for the C2 and want to thank the International Olympic Committee for getting the C2 into the Olympics. It has offered us an opportunity to show how strong we are.'

Brazil's Isaquias dos Santos bounced back from the disappointment of not winning a medal in the men's C2 to post the quickest time in the men's C1 1,000.

'My goal was to leave Tokyo with two medals and so I was

disappointed with our results in the C2,' dos Santos said 'but a fourth place is a good result but now I am very focussed on the C1. My goal now is to leave Tokyo with that gold medal.'

Two major showdowns were looming in the men's and women's K4 500 boats, with two time world champions Hungary set to take on a New Zealand crew that included three time Tokyo gold medallist Lisa Carrington in the women while Germany and Spain were expected to fight out the gold medal in the men's race.

There was an early taste of what to expect in the women's event with Hungary and New Zealand drawn in the same heat. Hungary, with K1 500 silver medallist Tamara Csipes and five time gold medallist Danuta Kozak remaining from Rio, edged out the New Zealand crew.

Kozak was still chasing her first gold for this week after finishing third in the women's K2 500 and fourth in the K1 500.

'I am just forgetting all the stuff from this week and focus on the K4,' Kozak said. 'That heat was good for our soul because we are still dominant and we want to win so badly,' Csipes said.

The men's K4 500 was a new event in Tokyo, replacing the K4 1,000 from previous Olympics. Germany won the gold in Rio but had to settle for the second quickest qualifying time behind Spain.

Marcus Walz, a K1 1,000 gold medallist from Rio, said the Spanish team were feeling strong this week.

'It was good for us to finally get out on the water and see how we are feeling,' Walz said. 'We are looking forward to racing tomorrow, not just against Germany, but so many other countries who we know are strong and can race for a medal.'

Brazil, China, Hungary and Germany picked up the final four gold medals on offer as the sprint programme came to an emotional end at the Sea Waterway course on Saturday.

Isaquias dos Santos won Brazil's first ever canoe sprint gold medal, Mengya Sun and Shixiao Xu picked up a first female Olympic gold medal for China, the German men's K4 finally broke through for their country's first gold medal of the week and the Hungarian women's K4 won their third consecutive Games crown.

The win for the Hungarian women's K4 gave Danuta Kozak a sixth career gold medal, moving her into outright second on the overall canoe sprint table and ended a frustrating week where she took bronze in the K2 500 and missed a medal in the K1 500.

'I was a little bit sad because I couldn't make the other races a good race so that made me a little bit frustrated,' Kozak said 'but after the end I could do the K4 and I am very proud of everyone and the team.'

The silver medal went to Belarus while Poland took the bronze. New Zealand had to settle for fourth, denying Lisa Carrington the chance for a record fourth Olympic medal in Tokyo.

There were emotional scenes for Isaquias dos Santos after he won the men's C1 1,000, the first Olympic gold medal in sprint for Brazil.

Dos Santos, a three time medallist in Rio, dedicated his gold to his former coach, who died from a brain tumour in 2018.

'I still can't believe it but it has always been my dream after Rio to come here and win a gold medal,' dos Santos said.

'The last five years have been really hard, especially after the passing of my coach, Jesus Morlan, so we had to overcome this and work even harder to win a medal.'

China's Hao Liu took the silver while Moldova's Serghei Tarnovschi took the bronze. In Rio Tarnovschi also took the bronze, only to have it removed after a positive drug test.

It was also an emotional day for Ronald Rauhe, who helped Germany to a K4 500 gold medal at his sixth and final Olympic appearance.

The Germans fought a tough battle against Spain to win that country's only gold medal of the week.

'It's hard for me to describe my emotions; today it was clear that I would do my last stroke and I'm just happy and really really proud that we finished first,' Rauhe said.