



Charlotte Henshaw.



Peter Kiss.



Laura Sugar.

Britain top paracanoe nation

World Championships

Great Britain's Charlotte Henshaw successfully defended her VL3 paracanoe world title in Copenhagen and said she hoped to get the chance to contest the event at the 2024 Paralympics in Paris.

The women's VL3 has been put forward by the ICF for inclusion in Paris, based on the growing numbers in the sport and the depth of talent. Henshaw, who won the women's KL2 in Tokyo, said the VL3 is ready for the Paralympics.

'You've seen it here; we had two heats which is the first time that's happened. It's a competitive race even before it is announced as part of the Paris programme,' Henshaw said.

'I really love that race. After Tokyo I had to get myself reset, to go back and do a few days of training, get over the jetlag and then get reset for this, not knowing what state my mind or my body was going to be in. I just wanted to enjoy this week.'

Henshaw finished ahead of British team mate Hope Gordon, with Ukraine's Nataliia Lahutenko third.

In two non Paralympic finals decided on the Thursday, Artur Chuprov of the Russian Canoe Federation won the men's VL1 final from Chile's Robinson Mendez and Italian Alessio Bedin while Lillemor Koeper of Germany won the women's VL1 ahead of team mate Esther Bode and France's Celine Brulais.

In other events there were strong performances from Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic medallists in their first major event since Japan.

Paracanoe gold medallists Peter Kiss from Hungary in the men's KL1, Serhii Yemelianov of Ukraine in the men's KL3, Great Britain's Laura Sugar and Henshaw in the KL3 and KL2 respectively, Germany's Edina Mueller in the women's KL1 and Brazil's Fernando Rufino in the VL2 all won their heats comfortably.

The early rounds of the canoe sprint event produced few surprises.

Denmark's Emma Jorgensen was the main hope for the host nation this week, following her two bronze medals at the Tokyo Olympics.

On Thursday she breezed through her heat of the K1 200m in front of an enthusiastic crowd.

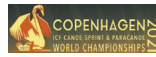
'It was very nice to get started after the Olympics. I think my arms and in my mind it has been tough to get over the Olympics,' Jorgensen said.

'It's nice not to have to take a flight to go somewhere; basically, I can sleep in my own bed.'

Hungary's Balint Kopasz showed he had not lost any form since winning at the Tokyo Olympics, cruising to a heat win in the men's K1 1,000m to book his ticket straight into the weekend's final.

He said staying focused after Tokyo was challenging but he wanted to defend his world title.

'It was hard because I would like to have relaxed after the Olympic Games,' he said, 'but I trained a lot because this world championships is very important for me and several other competitors I think.'



'My main aim is to keep the world champion title.'

Hungary began its quest for a fourth consecutive women's K4 canoe sprint world title with an impressive first round win in Denmark on the Friday.

Hungary had won eight of the past nine world titles and came with three of the crew members who won at the Tokyo Olympics the previous month.

The Hungarians posted the quickest time in the heats, edging our Belarus, the Tokyo silver medallists and the only country to beat Hungary at a world championships since 2009.

Anna Karasz, who was a member of the winning crew in 2014 and 2018 and who won in Tokyo, said the small change should not change the rhythm of the boat although preparation time for Copenhagen had been limited.

'Since Tokyo we've just had two sessions with the girls; we didn't have much opportunity to train together,' Karasz said, 'but we found the harmony with the girls. We didn't have a big change. I don't feel there is a big difference.'

'Life has been busy for the past month, a lot of events and we also had to do the training so it was exhausting sometimes. Now I'm just happy to race again and to finish the season here.'

The men's K2 500m and C2 500m will become Olympic events in Paris in 2024, replacing the 1,000 metre races. The change in distance has produced several new combinations, including the German pairing of Tobias Schultz and Martin Hiller, fastest qualifiers in Friday's heats.

'We had some races last year but our preparations for here only started one week ago because Martin was at the U23 world championships,' Schultz said.

'It's a new challenge. We are looking forward to Paris 2024. It's a good start for us in this new Olympic cycle.'

Spain's Cayetano Garcia and Pablo Martinez were the fastest qualifiers in the men's C2 500m, the second addition to the Paris 2024 programme.

In other Olympic events, Poland's Dorota Borowska posted the fastest time in the women's C1 200m while New Zealand's Aimee Fisher signalled her return to top level competition with a slashing time in the women's K1 500m, more than two seconds faster than the next quickest time.

Great Britain's domination of international paracanoe events continued with two more titles on the Friday.

Paralympic champion Emma Wiggs successfully defended her VL2 world title, while Jack Evers pipped his British teammate Stuart Wood to take the men's VL3. Brazil's Fernando Rufino added the men's VL2 world title to the Paralympic gold in Tokyo two weeks previously.

Great Britain was the most successful paracanoe nation in Tokyo, winning three gold, a silver and three bronze medals. On Friday Wiggs won her ninth ICF world title and her third in VL2.



Fernando Rufino.



Schultz/Hiller.



Aimee Fisher.