



Maciel pleased the crowd.



S Africans Birkett and Mocke.



Women's K1 winner Kiszli.



Csaj/Czéllai-Vörös blitz it.

ICF photographs

to get onto the top step,' Birkett said. 'It almost feels unreal being there today. The first thing I thought about was going home and seeing my baby boy, which is quite a weird feeling. There are so many strong guys out there you have to look over your shoulder all the time. The pace was quite hot at times; other times it was super slow. I just tried not to get complacent and focussed on the goals ahead.

Kiszli finished 2nd in last year's world championships and was not leaving anything to chance in Portugal. The leading pack ranged in size from four to nine, with Kiszli pulling away on the final lap to finish well ahead of Hungarian team mate and K2 partner Sara Mihalik. 'Gold is always better than silver,' Kiszli said. 'It was a hard race for me because I always worried I might fall in the water so I pushed hard and just tried to stay with the girls. 'I try to just focus on myself and not the others. We tried to work together as a group and it's easy because Sara and I know each other well.'

In the C1 competitions Spain's Manuel Campos held off a spirited challenge from team mate Manuel Garrido to win his third world title while Ukraine's Liudmyla Babak proved once again she is without peer in the women's C1. Campos won titles in 2012 and 2014 and has not finished outside the top three since 2009. The absence of four time Hungarian world champion Marton Kover opened the door for the Spaniard. 'I'm very happy to have won my third world title,' Campos said. 'It's been a little wait for a few years but I have been working very hard for this championships. Today was a hard race.'

Babak won last year's C1 world title by more than 3 minutes and, while Saturday's result was closer, the Ukrainian was never in doubt. 'This was a difficult race but I had trained hard for it,' Babak said.

Renáta Csaj and Hank McGregor are the two biggest names in canoe marathon history and on Sunday they each added another gold medal to their healthy collection. This time they shared the moment with their respective K2 partners on the final day. McGregor clocked up his fourth K2 title, teaming up for the first time with Andy Birkett to hold out Hungary's Adrian Boros and Laszlo Solti with Spain's Miguel Llorens and Luis Perez finishing 3rd. McGregor shocked the paddling world when he announced he would only contest the K2 this year but he was being coy about his future after Sunday's win. 'I had a fantastic time; it was an honour paddling with the current world champion,' McGregor said. 'That was probably the hardest thing for me, sitting in the commentary box watching everybody operate. It was an honour to watch Andy do what he does best. You never say never; next year is another year but I'm just going to enjoy the moment right now.' Just 24 hours earlier Birkett, in the absence of McGregor, won his first ever K1 world title. 'To be honest, after two laps I wanted to say to Hank "I want to jump off and have a sleep." I was pretty broken,' Birkett said. 'But that's when teamwork really makes all the difference. It was awesome paddling with Hank, such a thrill; the whole journey was awesome. I loved the race.'

Hungarian canoe marathon legend Renáta Csaj chalked up her 12th K2 world championship gold medal and her 19th title overall in a mesmerising performance on Sunday. The 41 year old Csaj teamed up with 22 year old Zsófia Czéllai-Vörös to blitz the women's field, finishing almost 3 minutes ahead of Spain's Eva Barrios and Amaia Osaba with another Spanish crew, Tania Álvarez and Tania Fernández, finishing 3rd. 'I really love this. I really love to do this,' Csaj said. 'This is always what motivates me; it is my greatest pleasure.'

Czéllai-Vörös said she was thrilled to paddle with Csaj. 'It was a great way to introduce our new K2 and it was a great pleasure to race with Renáta for her 19th gold medal,' Czéllai-Vörös said. 'I just want to say thank you to her that she chose me.' Csaj and Czéllai-Vörös had the race to themselves after fellow Hungarians Vanda Kiszli and Sara Mihalik were forced to withdraw with rudder problems. Csaj is also a seven time K1 world champion but missed a place in this year's field after finishing 4th behind Kiszli, Mihalik and Czéllai-Vörös in the Hungarian selection trials.

Earlier in the day Spain's Diego Romero and Oscar Grana won the men's C2 title, beating Hungary's Zoltan Koleszar and Levente Balla and the Czech Republic's Jakub Brezina and Jan Dlouhy. It was Grana's

fourth C2 title but his first alongside Romero. 'This was a very good race for us,' Grana said. 'It's great racing here in Portugal. There's a great Spanish crowd. It was a hard race; the first lap was very difficult.'

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- K1WJ:** 1 Z Csikós, Magyarország, 1:34:39.06. 2 D Fekete, Magyarország, 1:34:40.26. 3 E Russell, GB, 1:34:47.28.
- K1WU23:** 1 Z Czéllai-Vörös, Magyarország, 1:48:49.75. 2 L Katona, Magyarország, 1:49:03.65. 3 S Rees-Clark, GB, 1:51:47.43.
- K1W:** 1 V Kiszli, Magyarország, 2:06:16.40. 2 S Mihalik, Magyarország, 2:06:29.31. 3 E Barrios, España, 2:06:30.84. 8 L Broughton, GB, 2:09:01.58. 13 A Lane, GB, 2:13:06.82.
- K1MJ:** 1 T Rask, Danmark, 1:39:22.89. 2 R Foley, Ireland, 1:40:01.38. 3 V Petró, Magyarország, 1:40:03.29. 8 L Shaw, GB, 1:43:02.74. 16 W Scammell, GB, 1:46:44.40.
- K1MU23:** 1 J Vold, Norge, 1:53:26.37. 2 M Paufler, Deutschland, 1:53:26.93. 3 N Notten, S Africa, 1:53:32.73. 10 M Gregory, GB, 1:58:57.49.
- K1M:** 1 A Birkett, S Africa, 2:09:29.06. 2 A Boros, Magyarország, 2:09:30.85. 3 J Mocke, S Africa, 2:09:33.04. 18 T Pendle, GB, 2:16:01.82.
- C1MJ:** 1 D Hodován, Magyarország, 1:40:02.00. 2 L Dubois, France, 1:40:20.37. 3 A Klos, Polska, 1:40:30.68. 7 A Leech, GB, 1:44:03.18.
- K2WJ:** 1 Bakó/Kohalmi, Magyarország, 1:27:53.20. 2 Csikós/Tófalvi, Magyarország, 1:29:32.56. 3 Russell/Peters, GB, 1:31:19.65.
- K2W:** 1 Csaj/Czéllai-Vörös, Magyarország, 1:56:14.05. 2 Barrios/Osaba, España, 1:58:59.37. 3 Alvarez/Fernández, España, 1:59:29.22.
- K2MJ:** 1 Rask/Thomsen, Danmark, 1:35:15.46. 2 Alvarez/Borrego, España, 1:35:29.50. 3 MacKenzie/Evans, S Africa, 1:35:30.79. 12 Scammell/Bell, GB, 1:40:58.05.
- K2M:** 1 Birkett/McGregor, S Africa, 2:02:16.31. 2 Boros/Solti, Magyarország, 2:02:16.97. 3 Llorens/Pérez, España, 2:02:18.61. 14 Gregory/Smith, GB, 2:07:34.11.

And I quote...

... a competitor at the marathon nationals who referred to 'a fellow with a name I can't pronounce, which probably means he is from Richmond.' The London club have long welcomed overseas paddlers, the emphasis of late having moved from Ireland and South Africa to eastern Europe.

Barging on

The Barge Inn on the Kennet & Avon Canal at Honeystreet, often visited by DW support crews (and crop circle enthusiasts), has been closed this year (May, p11). Although there has been talk of converting it to a private house, agents Christie & Co told us that two offers to buy it as a public house are under consideration.

The agent has also paid a visit to the Peterborough Arms on the Wilts & Berks Canal at Dauntsey Lock, a closed pub which has been bought by the canal trust, restored as a canal centre and about to be reopened as a pub serving the local community once again.

National championships points

At the marathon ACM it was suggested that the national championships have little for those in the 18 - 35 age group who are not so good. Keith Moule made the very valid point 'It is the national championships.'

Numbers at the national championships have now made the event too large for most clubs to host although it is financially worthwhile. Might one solution, particularly for the older racers, be to restrict them to a single age group, not to be able to race in every age group from their own downwards with multiple race entries? They would still get far more competition time than, say, a slalomist at the equivalent slalom event.

World's toughest one day marathon?

Richard Harpham, who has raced the Devizes - Westminster, reckons the Canadian Muskoka River X is the world's toughest one day race. It is only 130km compared with the DW's 200 and has only 20 portages compared with 77 but the first of these, at 1.7km, starts to give warnings. Then there are three lakes and some of the rivers have to be paddled upstream. For a change, next year's circular race is to be run the other way round.