

Prindis was the fastest qualifier for the K1 final and the last athlete on the course with Prskavec waiting at the finish, having posted a sizzling 89.38, including a 2 second penalty.

It meant Prindis had to be fast and clean, his perfect run of 88.55 enough to get him top spot on the podium.

'It means a lot because I have raced here quite a few times and I have never been on the podium,' he said.

'I believe that I should be on the podium and I was hoping that one day I would be on top.

'I raced a very good qualification, semi final and final so I think I deserve to be on the podium.'

Germany's Sebastian Schubert took the bronze in a time of 91.44 seconds.

The men's C2 final was dominated by boats from France and the Czech Republic with the host nation fielding three boats and France four.

Kaspar and Sindler, 8th in last year's Olympics, dominated the early rounds and were once again in top form in the final with a time of 104.66, ahead of France's Olympic bronze medallists Gauthier Klaus and Matthieu Peche (107.42) and another French crew, Pierre Picco and Hugo Bisio (109.93)

'We had a dream run; we won all our races, qualification, semi final and now final; it's like a dream,' Sindler said.

'I think we really enjoyed the home atmosphere; the crowd was really loud and very nice here so I don't think it made us nervous.

'I think it was the advantage of the home town. We were very well prepared and everything just clicked together today.'

The big surprise was the failure of Slovakia's Olympic gold medallists, cousins Ladislav and Peter Skantar, to make the final.

There were also plenty of surprises in the women's C1 with multiple world champion Jessica Fox (Australia, fastest qualifier), Nadine Weratschnig and Nuria Vilarrubla (Spain) all missing gates and picking up 50 second penalties, ruling them out of the final.

Kimberley Woods backed up her strong European form to win in 111.15 with Franklin picking up 6 seconds of penalties to finish 2nd in 115.13 and Czech Monika Jancova taking bronze, 117.56.

'I kept it calm, kept the boat running and glad that I came out with a clean run, which was very difficult on this course, Woods said.

'2017 is going really well, winning Europeans and coming away with a win. I just hope I can keep the good form and move on to kayak as well.

'I was fortunate to go to Rio to have a watch and it made me more hungry so to start a new Olympic cycle with two wins is really good. I want to be one of the girls who moves the benchmarks for C1.'

The Czech Republic's Amalie Hilgertova won the women's extreme canoe slalom event while New Zealand's Mike Dawson won the men's.

Sitting in the stands at the Rio Olympics last year, Kimberley Woods could feel the hair standing up on the back of her neck.

It was hard not to get caught up in the emotion of an Olympic Games. She'd been given the chance to see the operations of Team GB up close and was lapping up every moment and in the back of her mind she was picturing herself on the Tokyo course in 2020, keeping her fingers crossed women's C1 would be confirmed on the programme.

Now it is official and Woods has added the first women's C1 World Cup title for 2017 to her European championship title, the goosebumps are coming regularly.

'It always does and just talking about it now makes it do it again, she said.

'To think it is now officially in the Olympic programme there's a lot to work on but I'm really hungry and really excited to get going.

'To start a new Olympic cycle with two wins is really good, having that motivation throughout the whole winter and just wanting to get better.'

Woods was one of the few C1 paddlers to tame the tricky Prague course with a who's who of the sport picking up missed gate 50 second penalties in the semi finals and then in the final the 21 year old managed to return a clean sheet which was enough to put her ahead of Mallory Franklin.

Woods is also excited to be one of the early pioneers for women's C1. It's been a long battle for the discipline, with the argument often being there was not the depth of talent for the event to be showcased on the Olympic stage but since the announcement of the sport's addition to the Olympic programme, numbers have swelled dramatically. There were more than 50 entries in Prague and that figure and the standard of competition will continue to grow.

'I know I have a lot to work on still so I'll just keep on chasing,' she said.



Top left:  
Joe Clarke  
Top right:  
Kimberley  
Woods.

Left:  
Kaspar/Sindler  
on the Prague  
course.

Belint Vekassy/ICF photographs

'I know that some of the girls in Britain, some of the younger girls, are really chasing us and trying to keep us on form.

'One of our second year juniors, she was fourth in the seniors and she's away doing exams at the moment, she's that young.

'Some of the girls here I've not even seen before or heard of before, seeing them make finals. It's great to see so many women competing, 50 people sitting on the start line. It's the most I've ever seen, so it's really good.'

There were emotional gold medals for Germany's Sideris Tasiadis and Spain's Maialen Chourraut on the final day.

Chourraut, the Rio gold medallist in the women's K1, revealed she has been battling vertigo since the Olympics and has had trouble training and Tasiadis, the silver medallist in the men's C1 at the London Olympics, broke through for his first World Cup win and spoke of the difficult time he has had in the past two years since his girlfriend's death from leukaemia.

Chourraut's path to the podium was difficult, as it was in Rio last year, needing a second run in qualifying to make the K1 semi final, but she found her best form in the final, posting an error free time of 104.68 to edge out Saturday's C1 winner, Kimberley Woods, in 104.92, with Germany's Ricardo Funk 3rd in 108.06 with 4 seconds of penalties.

'It's incredible. I can't believe I have started the season like this,' Chourraut said.

'Prague is a very difficult course for me. I have never made a semi final here. Today was my first time.

'For me this year has been very difficult. I have had some problems during the year. I have had vertigo. I feel like everything is moving.'

Tasiadis, who appeared to have the paddling world at his feet after finishing 2nd behind the legendary Tony Estanguet in the C1 at the London Olympics, could not hide his emotion as he crossed the line first on Sunday.

'For this is my first World Cup win,' he said.

'The last two years have been very difficult with my girlfriend having this terrible disease. Now I have a new girlfriend; she makes me stronger.

'You have to look into the future.'

Tasiadis finished in 100.36 seconds, a massive 1.52 seconds ahead of the Olympic silver medallist, Slovakia's Matej Benus, with Italy's Raffaello Ivaldi 3rd.

Just 0.07 seconds separated 2nd and 4th.

The capacity Czech crowd, who had the unusual situation of not having an athlete to watch in either the men's C1 or women's K1 finals, however, did have cause to celebrate after the victory of Tereza Fiserova and Jakub Jane in the C2 mixed final.

They finished in 127.82, ahead of fellow Czechs Veronika Vojtova and Jan Masek in 184.66.

## ICF

**K1W:** 1 M Chourraut, España, 104.68. 2 K Woods, GB, 104.92. 3 R Funk, Deutschland, 108.06. 4 M Franklin, GB, 108.77.

**K1M:** 1 V Prindis, Česká, 88.55. 2 J Prskavec, Česká, 89.38. 3 S Schubert, Deutschland, 91.44. 6 J Clarke, GB, 97.31. 18 B Forbes-Cryans, GB.

**C1W:** 1 K Woods, GB, 111.15. 2 M Franklin, GB, 115.13. 3 M Jancova, Česká, 117.56. 13 J Royle, GB.

**C1M:** 1 S Tasiadis, Deutschland, 100.36. 2 M Benus, Slovensko, 101.88. 3 R Ivaldi, Italia, 101.91. 5 D Florence, GB, 105.29. 10 R Westley, GB, 159.65.