

# Wins for Clarke and Florence

## Kraków Slalom

Reigning Olympic champions Denis Gargaud Chanut and Joseph Clarke showed some of their best form since their winning performances in Rio in 2016 to top qualifying easily on the opening day of the second World Cup in Kraków, Poland. Frenchman Gargaud Chanut was more than 2 seconds quicker than the next fastest man on the course, Slovakia's Marko Mirgorodsky, with the previous week's World Cup winner, German Sideris Tasiadis, third fastest in the men's C1 qualifiers. Gargaud Chanut posted a time of 81.96. Clarke cruised down the course in 77.99 seconds in the men's K1, putting him 1.14 seconds ahead of the previous week's World Cup winner, German Sebastian Schubert, with 2017 World Cup overall champion Vit Prindis of the Czech Republic 3rd. In the women's K1 Germany's Ricarda Funk showed the form that made her almost unbeatable last year when she qualified quickest in 89.07, just ahead of Great Britain's Mallory Franklin on 89.63. Austria's Corinna Kuhnle would have been quickest once again but for a gate touch which cost her a 2 second penalty. Her final time of 90.21 was 1.14 seconds behind Funk. In the women's C1 it was Austria's Viktoria Wolfhardt who topped the qualifying table in 94.47 seconds with Brazil's Ana Satila 1.27 seconds behind and Mallory Franklin 3rd.

Australia's Jessica Fox continued her rampaging start to the season with another World Cup gold medal on Saturday while Great Britain's triple Olympic silver medallist David Florence celebrated a long overdue return to the top of the podium in the men's C1. Fox won both C1 and K1 on the opening weekend of the World Cup season and then followed up with K1 gold in Kraków on Saturday but the closest competition came in the men's C1 with less than 1 second separating the top six competitors. Florence, who was also fastest in the semi final, posted 83.86 seconds in the final to just edge out Slovakia's Alexander Slafkovsky with Czech Michal Jane taking the bronze medal. 'It couldn't have been any better, to be honest,' Florence said. 'We had the European championships not that long ago and I won the semi final and then I just didn't put in a good run. It's so disappointing to feel like you're going all right and to put in good races in qualifying or semis but not to do it when it really counts. Today, especially going off last, to put in another really good run and, fortunately, good enough for the win as well, I'm so happy. I'm really pleased with that.' There were three British paddlers in the men's final but two of the biggest names in the sport missed out. Olympic gold medallist, Denis Gargaud Chanut picked up a 50 second penalty for a missed gate and finished 28th while Sideris Tasiadis, a winner at the previous week's World Cup, finished 19th in the semi.

Jess Fox had allowed her competitors a glimmer of hope when she was only able to qualify 17th fastest for the K1 semi finals but then put in a sizzling run to qualify second fastest for the final. She finished the final in 91.51, 0.89 second ahead of surprise silver medallist Lucie Baudu of France, with Italy's Stefanie Horn finishing 3rd. 'It's such a difficult course and quite hard on the arms,' Fox said. 'I didn't go as fast as my semi final but I was clean and tidy with no major mistakes and a sprint to the finish. I'm so thrilled to win again. I can't believe it.' Ricarda Funk had a rare appearance outside the top three. Although she was easily the quickest paddler on the course in the K1 final, Funk



Gargaud Chanut produced a fast first run at Kraków.



C1 winner Sideris Tasiadis.



Sebastian Schubert returned to top form at Liptovsky Mikulas.

Tereza Fiserova finishing 2nd in 113.96. Great Britain's current world champion, Mallory Franklin, finished 3rd. The Australian has dominated C1 events in recent years and will be a short priced favourite to win when the discipline makes its Olympic debut in Tokyo in 2020. 'When I got into that final with a solid run I just really wanted to charge it and attack it,' Fox said. 'I fixed the errors I made in the first run and I was really pleased and very surprised by that time in the finish. I think the field is growing every year and the girls are very competitive.'

Schubert has to go back to Augsburg in 2014 for his last World Cup gold medal but showed his very best form to defeat a quality field on Sunday. Schubert posted a time of 92.06 to edge out Poland's Dariusz Popelia, who landed a 2 second penalty, by 0.71 seconds. Olympic gold medallist Joseph Clarke took the bronze. 'All the sport has changed a bit since the 2013 and 2014 season,' Schubert said. 'The guys in the finals take more risks and that's what I've been training on in the winter, to go closer to the gates. It seems that it's worked.' My last win was four years ago so I am super happy to win it now after many 4th, 3rd and 2nd places last year. It's a good way to start the season with a win in a World Cup. I was also in the final at the Europeans but it's good to win.' The women's extreme kayak gold medal went to experienced creek boat racer Sage Donnelly of the United States. Brazil's Ana Satila took the silver and Russia's Alsu Minazova took the bronze. In the men's extreme kayak it was Russia's Pavel Eigel who took the gold, ahead of New Zealand's Mike Dawson and Switzerland's Dimitri Marx.

## ICF

**K1W:** 1 J Fox, Australia, 101.20. 2 C Kuhnle, Österreich, 102.78. 3 R Funk, Deutschland, 103.65. 10 M Franklin, GB, 118.99. 15 K Woods, GB.

**K1M:** 1 S Schubert, Deutschland, 92.06. 2 D Popelia, Polska, 92.77. 3 J Clarke, GB, 93.01. 9 B Forbes-Cryans, GB, 113.78.

**C1W:** 1 J Fox, Australia, 106.34. 2 T Fiserova, Ceska, 113.96. 3 M Franklin, GB, 115.10. 4 K Woods, GB, 118.54.

**C1M:** 1 S Tasiadis, Deutschland, 96.11. 2 A Slafkovsky, Solvensko, 96.66. 3 R Westley, GB, 97.31. 12 D Florence, GB.

**K1WX:** 1 S Donnelly, USA. 2 A Satila, Brasil. 3 A Minazova, Rossija.

**K1MX:** 1 P Eigel, Rossija. 2 M Dawson, NZ.

ICF photographs