

# One win for Fox but by over 10 seconds

## Ivrea Slalom

Twice Olympian Corinna Kuhnle unleashed one of the best canoe slalom runs of her career, recording a time more than 6 seconds faster than the next best paddler on the opening day of the fourth World Cup in Ivrea. The Austrian's K1 time of 91.67 seconds shocked her opponents, with twice Olympic medallist Jessica Fox the next fastest in 97.69. 'I felt good coming here and I was excited to be on the start line again,' Kuhnle said. 'I did a lot of training here last year leading up to our Olympic selections, so I knew this course pretty well coming here today.'

Another to take advantage of local knowledge was Italian Zeno Ivaldi, who scorched down his new home course in a time more than a second faster than the next best paddler in the men's K1. Ivaldi's time of 87.83, a full 1.02 seconds quicker than Poland's Maciej Okreglak, was even more meritorious considering he had not been feeling well in the lead up to Friday's heats. 'I didn't feel really good this morning because I had a fever but then I just said "Okay, I know this course. I just have to do an ordinary run to qualify,"' he said. 'It's always fun to race at home, to wake up in your own bed, go down to the course, find your friends; it's so much fun like this.'

Earlier, Fox had set the pace in the women's C1, picking up a late penalty for a gate touch but still managing to be the quickest qualifier. The Australian posted a time of 113.52, just 0.17 seconds ahead of Austria's Viktoria Wolffhardt, who had a clean run, with Brazil's Ana Satila third fastest on a course where overnight rain had turned the water brown. 'It's been a while since our last World Cup so the first run you feel the nerves again and you're not sure of the competition,' Fox said. 'The course is quite open so I'm expecting it to be a little bit harder in the semis but it is a hard river; it's still a challenging race course. The water colour's definitely changed and that really does have an impact. Visually, you can tell the difference; the waves are different colours and they look bigger sometimes.'

Ultra consistent Slovakian Matej Benus was the quickest in the men's C1, his time of 93.55 half a second faster than Italy's Roberto Colazingari. The Olympic silver medallist, having his first slalom run at Ivrea, said there was room for improvement. 'I feel pretty good but I'm not that satisfied with my run because there were too many small mistakes,' he said. 'This is my first time here. I really love the course. It feels like we're part of nature.' In the men's C2 the Czech Republic's Jonas Kaspar and Marek Sindler in 101.00 were the fastest qualifiers, ahead of Germany's Robert Behling and Thomas Becker, who had to have a second run after breaking their paddle in the first qualifier.

Jessica Fox and Czech Vit Prindis both recorded their third World Cup wins of the 2017 season, storming to victory on Saturday. Their wins could not have been more different; Fox, a triple C1 world champion, finished more than 10 seconds ahead of Viktoria Wolffhardt while Prindis finished just 0.29 seconds ahead of the USA's Michal Smolen in the men's K1. In the men's C2 it was a return to the top of the podium for Slovak cousins Ladislav and Peter Skantar, the Olympic gold medallists in Rio. Fox won in stunning fashion, posting a time of 100.83 to finish well ahead of Wolffhardt on 111.57, with Czech Tereza

Fiserova 3rd. 'I gave it everything,' Fox said. 'I'm really thrilled with that run. I love this course. I have great memories in Ivrea and to win again here is fantastic.'

Prindis started 2017 in career best form, winning the K1 at the opening two World Cups before a back injury kept him out of the final in Markkleeberg, but he was one of the only top ten paddlers this year to make it into Saturday's final, his 87.15 just enough to edge out Smolen on 87.44. 'I didn't expect that this many times I would be on the top in the World Cups,' Prindis said. 'I was hoping today that maybe I would make the final and then maybe make the top three. The water is quite difficult and we only had a few sessions before the races so that is not enough to be comfortable with the water.'

Slovenia's Peter Kauzer finished 3rd. Ladislav and Peter Skantar have struggled in 2017 to find their gold medal winning form from the Rio Olympics but broke through in Ivrea in 100.99 to take C2 gold, ahead of Robert Behling and Thomas Becker. 'We have three weeks until the World Championships and we feel very good because it is what is important,' Ladislav Skantar said. Saturday's results extended the lead of Fox and Prindis in the World Cup standings with the World Cup final to be held in La Seu d'Urgell in Spain the next weekend while Jonas Kaspar and Marek Sindler led the C2 standings.

Germany celebrated double gold on the final day with Ricarda Funk notching her third consecutive K1 title and Sideris Tasiadis his second C1 title for 2017. Funk had been unbeatable since the second World Cup of the season and had opened up a commanding lead on the overall standings for 2017. Her time of 97.80 in Sunday's final, including a two second penalty, left her 1.14 seconds ahead of Jessica Fox, with Austria's Lisa Leitner finishing 3rd. 'I'm feeling really good,' Funk said. 'Yes, there is a little bit of pressure but I am paddling for me and not for anyone else so I'm trying to do my best and I want to be satisfied at the finish. Maybe I'm more focussed this year or maybe it's experience.'

Tasiadis was also enjoying a stellar 2017, winning two World Cup gold medals and two silver medals in a strong consistent performance in a discipline which is very even. 'It's been an incredible year for me until now because at every World Cup I have been on the podium,' Tasiadis said. 'I think this year I am not so much under pressure because it is not an Olympic year. I want to come to the races and have fun. Every year in C1 you have to do a perfect run because if you are not on the line or do one penalty second you will not be able to win the race.' Tasiadis finished in a time of 91.10 with Slovakia's Alexander Slafkovsky 2nd in 91.97 and team mate Matej Benus third.

## ICF

**K1W:** 1 R Funk, Deutschland, 97.80. 2 J Fox, Australia, 98.94. 3 L Leitner, Österreich, 99.44.

**K1M:** 1 V Prindis, Ceska, 87.15. 2 M Smolen, USA, 87.44. 3 P Kauzer, Solvenija, 89.31.

6 Z Franklin, GB, 92.97.

**C1W:** 1 J Fox, Australia, 100.83. 2 V Wolffhardt, Österreich, 111.57. 3 T Fiserova, Ceska, 115.70.

5 J Royle, GB, 121.42. 15 B Farrow, GB.

**C1M:** 1 S Tasiadis, Deutschland, 91.10. 2 A Slafkovsky, Slovensko, 91.97.

3 M Benus, Slovensko, 94.17. 18 T Quinn, GB.

# Woods takes fourth place

## La Seu d'Urgell Slalom

Two of the Rio gold medallists had to do it the hard way but all four were safely through to weekend action at the World Cup final at the venue where the sport made its Olympic return 25 years ago. Great Britain's Joseph Clarke in the men's K1 and France's Denis Gargaud Chanut in the men's C1 needed second runs at the Seu d'Urgell slalom course, the home of canoe slalom at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992. Spain's Maialen Chourraut gave the local fans plenty to cheer about when she qualified sixth fastest behind series leader Ricarda Funk in the women's K1. Germany's Funk was chasing a fourth consecutive World Cup title and recorded a perfect run of 102.37 to finish ahead of Olympic silver and bronze medallist Jessica Fox of Australia, on 103.28. Clarke made a disastrous return to racing, picking up 100 seconds in penalties for missing two gates on his first run but then made amends on his second journey down the course to qualify comfortably for Saturday's semi finals. Fastest qualifier in the K1 was France's Boris Neveu on 91.52, ahead of Czech Jiri Prskavec on 92.04. Gargaud Chanut was 28th after his first run behind Slovakia's Alexander Slafkovsky before finding his form on the second

run. Slafkovsky's time of 97.37 was 0.70 second quicker than series leader Sideris Tasiadis, on 98.07. Local star Nuria Vilarrubla showed the benefit of local knowledge to qualify fastest in the women's C1, posting a time of 114.07 with Austria's Viktoria Wolffhardt second on 114.46. Fox, chasing a fourth consecutive World Cup, was sixth fastest. In the men's C2 Olympic gold medallist cousins Ladislav and Peter Skantar of Slovakia picked up 6 seconds in penalties, the most in the field, to qualify 10th for the semi finals behind French pair Gauthier Klauss and Matthieu Peche. The Frenchmen recorded a time of 106.59, ahead of the Czech Jonas Kaspar and Marek Sindler in 107.45.

Nuria Vilarrubla thrilled a big home crowd, snatching gold in the women's C1, but her win could not deny Jessica Fox the 2017 C1 World Cup title. Slovenia's Peter Kauzer posted one of the closest wins of the season, his time of 86.96 a mere 0.04 second ahead of Boris Neveu in the men's K1. Czech Vit Prindis finished 6th in the final, enough to secure him the overall 2017 K1 title. The biggest drama of the day came in the men's C2 with Germany's Robert Behling and Thomas Becker winning and, in doing so, overtaking Jonas Kaspar and Marek Sindler for the season's title. Kaspar and Sindler finished 4th