

Heath retains K1 200m

Szeged Regatta

SZEGED 2017
ICF CANOE SPRINT WORLD CUP

Any concerns Lisa Carrington's decision to add team boats to her repertoire might impact her individual races were blown away in Szeged on the Friday when the New Zealander blitzed the field in her first K1 500m race of the season.

While it was only a heat, Carrington showed no ill effects from sitting out individual races the previous weekend to be one of the most impressive performers on day one of the sprint World Cup 2.

Carrington also teamed with Caitlin Ryan to win their K2 500m heat easily, finishing more than one second ahead of German Olympic silver medallists Franziska Weber and Tina Dietze.

Saturday's men's K1 1,000m final was shaping as a Rio rerun with gold medallist Marcus Walz, silver medallist Josef Dostál, Portugal's Ferdinand Pimenta, Denmark's Rene Poulsen and Slovakia's Peter Gelle all in Saturday's final.

Dostál, who finished second behind Germany's Tom Liebscher in his semi final, was hoping conditions would improve for him in the gold medal race.

'I don't like the water here because for me it is very tough,' he said.

'And the back wind; for a guy like me with this weight, it is very hard to compete but luckily I made it to the final and we will see tomorrow. I am sometimes very bad in semi finals but then I can show up in finals.'

Spain's Walz was one of the few Olympic medallists to find the going tough on Friday, just sneaking into Saturday's final as the fastest third place getter.

Denmark's Olympic K1 500 silver medallist, Emma Jorgensen, who relegated Carrington to third in Rio, failed to make the following day's final.

German Olympic gold medallists Sebastian Brendel and Jan Vandrey cruised into the final of the C2 1,000 but the Rio bronze medallists from the same event, Ukraine's Dmytro Ianchuk and Taras Mishchuk, had to settle for fourth in their semi and would miss the final.

The Rio gold and silver medallists in the men's K1 200 showed they have been working hard in the off season, with Great Britain's Liam Heath and France's Maxime Beaumont winning their Friday afternoon heats.

Brazil's Isaquias Santos, a hometown hero after taking silver in the C1 1,000 in Rio, would face fellow Olympic finalists Czech Martin Fuksa and Italian Carlo Tacchini.

After dominating the C1 races in Portugal a week earlier, Hungary's Virag Balla would face a sterner test in Saturday's C1 500 final after finishing second behind Canada's Katie Vincent in her semi final.

Serbia's Olympic K2 1,000 silver medallists Marko Tomicevic and Milenko Zoric would start red hot favourites in the final, while Australia would have two women, Alyssa Bull and Cat McArthur, in the final of the K1 1,000.

In medals decided on Friday, German Paralympic silver medallist Edina Muller won the KL1 200 in front of a big contingent of family and friends.

I was a little sick at the start of the season for about two months, so I'm just happy that I'm back and it's working really well again,' she said.

'Szeged is a very special competition for me. I've never been here but I'm half Hungarian so my whole family could come.

'I have a nice little home crowd here; my 80 year old grandmother could come and watch my first race in canoe so that was very special for me.'

France's Remy Boulle won the KL men's 200, Russia's Nadezda Andreeva the KL2 women's 200 and another Russian, Victor Potanin, the VL3 men's 200.

Major upsets and crews racing together in their first season dominated Saturday's finals with a strong tailwind helping paddlers set several world best times.

Little respect was shown to Olympic medallists and world champions as new names and new combinations upset the form guide in front of a big Hungarian crowd.

They were brought to their feet when local hope 20 year old Balint Kopasz upset a field full of Rio Olympic finalists to win the K1 1,000.

Kopasz, who didn't even make the final in Rio, finished ahead of Portugal's Fernando Pimenta and Spain's Roi Rodriguez with Rio gold medallist Marcus Walz fading to finish ninth.

'I am very happy that I could be stronger than the Olympic medallists,' Kopasz said.

'The weather was very bad but I felt strong today.'

Russian Elena Anishina, who competed in the K2 500 in Rio, was another to cause a major upset, upstaging Lisa Carrington in a thrilling finish to the K1 500.

Anishina, racing in lane nine, finished in 1:47.755 with Carrington second in 1:47.840. The time was just a fraction of a second outside the world's quickest ever time in this event.

'I did not expect to win but I was trying to concentrate,' Anishina said.

'I did not know where Lisa was but I was feeling very good from the beginning.'

World fastest times were set in the men's C2 1,000, the K2 1,000 and the women's C1 500.

Poland's Vincent Slominski and Mateusz Kaminski, who won the world U23 C2 title in 2013 but had not raced together since, reunited to edge out Cuba's Serquey Torres and Fernando Jorge in a time of 3:27.543.

Triple Olympic gold medallist Sebastian Brendel and his partner, Jan Vandrey, finished 4th.

'The teams here are very strong, so for us to win we can look forward to a good European championships and world championships,' Slominski said.

'We have only been back together for two weeks and now we have won so we are very happy.'

Spain's Francisco Cubelos and Iñigo Pena came to Szeged having had only one event together previously but showed they are a force for the future by storming down the extreme outside lane to win the K2 1,000.

They edged out Ukraine's Vitaliy Tsurkan and Oleh Kukharyk, winners in Portugal a week earlier, with Marko Tomicevic and Milenko Zoric, finishing 5th.

'Our first race was two weeks ago in the Spanish trials,' Cubelos said.

'We've had very little time together so we think we can improve even further. We knew we were fast because we won in Spain against some very fast Spanish boats.'



Balint Kopasz won K1 over 1km.



Laurence Vincent-Lapointe.



Lisa Carrington, 2nd over 500m.

Balint Vekassy photographs