



Eidam/Bachmann take the U23 500m title.



Aimee Fisher took both 200m and 500m under 23 titles.

the Hungarian turned the tables when the pair met at the European championships earlier in the month.

A quality field headed by Olympic silver medallist Emma Jørgensen set the scene for thrilling women's K1 500 and 200 finals. Jørgensen, who took silver for Denmark behind Hungary's Danuta Kozac at last year's Olympics, qualified sixth fastest for Sunday's 500 final behind U23 European champion Hermien Peters with New Zealand's Aimee Fisher second fastest. 'This season has been getting better and better; my focus has been more on education so my shape hasn't been what it was supposed to be like,' Jørgensen said. 'My coach tells me when we get to the senior worlds I will be in the shape I was in the Olympics so I hope so. There is some pressure but I think the biggest pressure is from myself.' Peters set an impressive 2:03.676 paddling into a strong headwind. 'It's going to be interesting on Sunday,' Peters said. 'I've already had a good year. I've already won some medals at World Cups. I'm European U23 champion. I didn't really train for this competition because my focus is on the seniors so this is more like a hard training session.'

Fisher is one of the most improved paddlers in the sport this year, having already strung together several impressive World Cup performances, including a silver behind Hungary's Dora Lucz in the 200 metres. As well as being second fastest in the 500 on Friday, Fisher was fastest in the heats of the 200, her time of 43.296 just ahead of Lucz in 44.143. 'It's been awesome. I'm just making the most of every day,' Fisher said. 'It's really exciting because there's a lot of really cool young paddlers coming through at the moment so it's pretty challenging. There's lots of good racing.'

Lucz said she was hoping to use this weekend as good practice ahead of the senior world championships. 'It's a step before the senior worlds but I like racing so I'm happy to be here,' Lucz said. 'My World Cup win gave me confidence; now I believe I can do this but I also know I have to work. The girls here are very fast.' In other results, Ukraine's Oleh Kukharyk was fastest in the men's U23 K1 500, ahead of Artuur Peters, while Hungary qualified fastest for the final of the men's U23 K4 500. Germany was the quickest in the men's junior K4 500 while Russia's Arina Anoshkina and Svetlana Chernigovskaya were the fastest in the women's U23 K2 500. Alena Nazdrova and Kamila Bobr were the fastest qualifiers in both the U23 C2 500 and C2 200 women's event but Virag Balla was the quickest in the heats of the women's U23 C1 200 with Canada's Katie Vincent second and Nazdrova third. Lithuania's Henrikas Zustautas shaded Olympic medallist Isaquias Santos in the heats of the men's U23 C1 200.

Triple Olympic medallist Isaquias Queiroz dos Santos would turn his focus towards this year's senior world championships in Racice after winning the C1 1,000. Queiroz dos Santos was one of the few paddlers to master the strong headwinds on a day the extreme outside lanes benefitted from the conditions. 'I'm really happy; the wind was very difficult but it was okay,' he said. 'This competition is not the most important this year; it is for me preparation for the senior world championships but I am still very happy to win here.' Four gold medallists and several minor placegetters raced in lane nine, which had some protection from the wind; however, dos Santos was able to win from lane four. Winners from lane nine were Argentina's Agustin Vernice in the men's U23 K1 1,000, Germany's Finn Eidam and Benedikt Bachmann in the men's K2 U23 1,000, China's Hongzheng Li and Wenhua Chen in the men's C2 U23 1,000 and Russia's Ian Kavaliauskas in the C1 junior men's 1,000.

Li and Chen said their win was a big moment in their two year career together. 'This is a breakthrough,' Chen said. 'We didn't have much confidence at the start so we just did our best. The wind was a little less

in our lane and we were able to take advantage.' Eidam and Bachmann were competing in just their fourth race together. 'Of course it was hard to know where we were but the Russians were pushing us very hard in lane eight,' Eidam said. 'For me this is unbelievable. I have never experienced this before. We have improved in every race. Next year we will see what happens; hopefully we can go together again.'

Kavaliauskas said it was good to be back on top of the podium. 'This is the second time I have won this but I am nothing without my team and my coach so I really want to thank them,' he said. 'I think there was a small advantage in lane nine because the wind was coming from the left. Next year I will be competing in U23 but for me the big goal is Tokyo 2020.' In other results China's Yanan Ma won the C1 junior women's 500 while Alena Nazdrova won the showdown with Virag Balla in the women's U23 C1 500.

Hungary won the women's U23 K4 500. 'We had a great start and we tried to remain focussed,' said Eszter Malcsiner. 'We had a really tough final 100 metres but we did it so it is worth it. We've been training together since the World Cup in Szeged. We are from two different clubs so we tried to paddle together as much as possible.' The Hungarians also took the honours in the women's K4 junior 500. 'For the whole race the Spanish girls were ahead of us but in the last 50 metres we were able to get ahead,' Anna Lucz said. 'On the start line we were talking among ourselves. I think that was good because then we didn't feel so nervous. Winning this is a dream for me. My dream has come true.'

The U23 women's K1 1,000 went to 2016 Olympian Alyssa Bull. 'You're not only racing all the other girls out there, who are all paddling so well, but you're also taking on that headwind,' an exhausted Bull said after the race. 'Far out, that was like the main competition out there. I think everyone was just trying to stay low in their boat. It's a long way. I haven't really tapered for this but I love racing so when it comes to a race I can be pretty competitive.'

Germany's Jacob Schopf, racing from lane four, won the K1 junior men's 1,000. 'I got my title again so I'm pretty happy,' Schopf said. 'In my preparation first I was ill and then my paddle broke but in the last week everything was okay. This gives me more motivation for the next years. Hopefully I can get on the A team for Germany next year.'

Fellow Germans Jakob Kurschat and Jakob Thordsen won the K2 junior 1,000. 'It was very stormy but they were our conditions,' Kurschat said. 'This is unbelievable. I cannot describe what it means for us.'

The women's K1 junior 1,000 was won by the Czech Republic's Sofie Kinclova, who finished two seconds ahead of her closest rival. 'It's amazing but I almost died out there; the wind was very strong,' she said. 'It was four minutes and 44 seconds; last year it was four minutes. I race in the 500 and the 200 so the 1,000 is very good for me. I want to win the Olympic Games more than one time.'

In the junior men's C2 1,000 it was Hungary's Adam Slihoczki and Attila Szoke who won. 'This is the top of my career so I am very happy,' Slihoczki said. 'We've been paddling for seven years and together for two years. Now we want to race in the U23 and become champions again.'

Aimee Fisher has sent a warning to the rest of the paddling world with two dominant winning performances on the final day. Fisher's victory in the K1 200 and 500 was the stand out performance in a weekend where medals were shared among 30 different countries. 22 finals were contested on a jam packed final day which included Henrikas Zustautas winning his third U23 C1 200 title and, in the process, relegating Brazil's triple Olympic medallist, Isaquias dos Santos, to the silver medal. 'It was more motivation because he was