

thought I must have stuffed it up like I did yesterday,' Reynolds said. 'I felt a lot more controlled than yesterday. Yesterday was just a panic paddle I think. I think I just had to get my head back together and get back on top of it.'

Seipel triumphed in the VL2 final despite a limited preparation. 'It feels pretty special especially as I haven't really been focusing on the V1 very much,' Seipel said. 'I guess if I can stay on top with minimal training in the V, that's fantastic and if it gets included in the Paralympic programme I'll focus on it a bit more. I think it would be great if it does get on to the programme. It was so successful last year. I think we had a great debut as a sport.'

Two Olympic medallists were upstaged on the second day but both were still safely through to the finals. Local hope Martin Fuksa squeezed out Brazil's Olympic silver medallist, Isaquias Queiroz dos Santos, in their heat of the C1 1,000 with only first place progressing directly to the final while New Zealand's Lisa Carrington and Caitlin Ryan were too strong for German silver medallists Franziska Weber and Tina Dietze in the K2 500. Fuksa finished 6th in the Rio final but believed the home crowd could help him reach the podium on the weekend. 'It was a hard race because Isaquias had a fast start,' Fuksa said. 'It was a fast race but I had the better finish. I'm not nervous because I'm super happy that the world championships are in the Czech Republic. I think, yes, the crowd could make a difference because all my family will be here.'

Twice Olympic champion Germany's Sebastian Brendel had no problems qualifying directly for the C1 1,000 final but said the first world championships after an Olympics is always a challenge. 'I had a good preparation at home; they were good weeks for me,' Brendel said. 'It's a good chance for the rookies to get to the final or make it onto the podium. The older guns must show that they can compete against the young ones.'

Carrington and Ryan found themselves in the same heat as Germany's Weber and Dietze with only the winner qualifying directly for the final. 'It was good for both of us to get out there finally in the K2 and finally have a crack; we've been waiting for a little while now,' Carrington said. 'There's never an easy road to the finals so we wanted to really give it a crack at winning today so we could go straight through.'

Ryan said the strong New Zealand team had enjoyed a good preparation for the world championships. 'The team we've created and the support around us has been really good so I think it's allowed us to focus on what we need to do to bring the best in the racing this weekend,' Ryan said. Carrington, twice an Olympic gold medallist, set herself a punishing schedule, competing in four events. On Wednesday she eased her way into the final of the K1 500, finishing second in her semi final behind Belarus' Volha Khudzenka. Khudzenka and Carrington were the fastest two qualifiers for the final. In other results, Belarus' Aleh Yurenia was the fastest qualifier for the men's K1 1,000 final, just ahead of Czech Olympic silver medallist Josef Dostál. Canada's Katie Vincent and Laurence Vincent-Lapointe were very impressive in qualifying fastest for the women's C2 500 while the experienced German pairing of Max Hoff and Marcus Gross were fastest in the men's K2 1,000.

New Zealand and Hungary drew first blood in the battle for women's K4 500 supremacy, qualifying directly for the weekend's finals. In one of the most eagerly anticipated events on the programme, New Zealand finished ahead of Germany in their heat, while Hungary proved too strong for France in their race. Twice Olympic gold medallist Lisa Carrington moved to the team boat this year and, after helping win gold medals at the opening two World Cups sitting in the second seat on the boat, moved to the front for Friday's heat. 'I've got an amazing group of girls behind me; they just make my job super easy,' Carrington said. 'It's just an awesome team effort. It's so nice with the work that we've done that we are able to show it today. We've obviously put high expectations on ourselves so we just want to go out there and execute what we think we can do.' The New Zealanders, minus Carrington, finished 5th at last year's Olympics and Kayla Imrie said the improvement was a reward for effort. 'There's been a lot of work that we've put into it,' she said. 'This doesn't come easy and there's been a lot of sweat and tears along the way. I'm proud of all the girls and what we've done to get where we are today; hopefully the weekend turns out for us and we can put a good performance on.'

The Hungarians had been forced to rebuild their crew since winning back to back Olympic gold medals in London and Rio with legends Danuta Kozak and Gabriella Szabo not paddling this year. Krisztina Fazekas-Zur, the only remaining member of the two Olympic crews, said there is always pressure on the Hungarians to perform. 'We know each other because we race in Hungary together but we are definitely



*Emma Wiggs.*



*Jonathan Young.*



*The Hungarian women's K4 new lineup.*



*Serhii Yemelianov cools his hands.*

new in the K4,' she said. 'I'm very happy because they are giving me so much fire; there's a really positive vibe. I really like it because, especially after the Olympics sometimes, the motivation level is not that high, so they are helping me a lot. Every year it is the same for us; we know