

## Drug cheats

A Japanese slalomist failed a drugs test after a rival for Olympic places had spiked his drink with a banned drug. Eventually the guilty party owned up after a twinge of conscience. However, if he had not done so there would have been a grave miscarriage of justice. It also opens up the possibility of a drug cheat being caught and somebody else, not worried about a ban, 'owning up' on his behalf.

Bence Horvath has been banned for four years after failing an out of competition drugs test. He had already been dropped by the 2016 Hungarian Olympic team because of an 'atypical doping pattern' but continued racing elsewhere. The failed test was on June 12th last year. His ban has been enacted from that date, costing his two silver medals in K1 200m. In the world championships race at Racice, won by Liam Heath, Latvia's Aleksejs Rumjancers now gets the silver and Russia's Evgenii Lukantsar the bronze. The upgrades in the European championships go to Serbia's Marko Dragosavljevic and Spain's Carlos Garrote.

## Popular canoeists

In an ICF poll with over 20,000 votes cast, Lisa Carrington of New Zealand had the most popular performance of 2017, her K1 200m world title. Indeed, the ICF frequently use her picture in publicity. Liam Heath was placed 3rd for the corresponding men's performance while Lani Belcher was 10th for her marathon world title. Only Jessica Fox, in 9th place, was not a flat water paddler. I suspect, given Olympic TV viewing figures, the general public would have gone for slalom in preference and the outcome here was more indicative of the people who look at the ICF website, a bias which is of some concern. My favourite performance of 2017? Young German Emma Grigull in the IC world championships at Pwllheli, nowhere in the results in an event you would be hard pushed to find on the ICF website but awe inspiring racing, sheer exuberance and a huge grin in an event where older men usually dominate. I wonder how much publicity the ICF gave the championships as I didn't see any.

## Future venues

The ICF have announced venues for forthcoming world championships. Ocean racing will be at Viana do Castelo in 2020 and back again on the Iberian peninsula at Lanzarote the following year. In 2022 the slalom will be at Ausburg for a fourth time with the juniors at Ivrea, the sprint at Dartmouth with the juniors at Szegeed, the marathon at Ponte de Lima and the French running both the wild water racing at Treignac and the polo at St Omer.

The IC Europa Cup will be contested just outside Berlin this year, with Sanguinet near Bordeaux next year. The next world championships will be on Lake Macquarie in Australia in 2020.

## Hungarian developments

Szegeed claims to be the spiritual home of sprint racing and has produced an impressive set of competitors in recent years. The course is now to be widened and roofs put on the stands, car parking increased and the local roads reworked.

Danuta Kozak, who has five Olympic wins to her name, returns to racing this year after a year out for the birth of her first child but has had a lot of injury and illness problems since last autumn. Natasa Doucher-Janics, a triple Olympic winner but now 35, also returns to competition this year



Lisa Carrington.



Emma Grigull.



Danuta Kozak.



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