



*The Troja River course.*



*Angele Hug, centre.*

Funk picked up four seconds in penalties with just over one second covering the first seven place getters in the final.

Hometown heroes and Paris bound paddlers Jiri Prskavec and Gabriela Satková sent their local fans into raptures with double gold on the Saturday.

Satková would compete at her first Olympic Games later this year and celebrated with women's C1 victory over a field which included the current Olympic and world champions.

Prskavec would be aiming to defend his K1 Olympic gold in Paris but on Saturday it was in the men's C1, which he only started paddling competitively last year, where he tasted success. Prskavec missed qualification for the C1 at the Games but is already planning for Los Angeles in 2028.

His win came less than 24 hours after a big mistake in his favoured K1 kept him out of a final in front of his home crowd. He said Saturday's final needed a change of approach.

I went out there, I played and I had fun,' Prskavec said.

'It's my first C1 win and in front of my home crowd so I can't imagine a much better day. I have to show that I can perform under pressure and win medals and I didn't manage so let's wait in four years and I will do my best.

'I had to change my mindset before today because yesterday I was too focussed about the seconds, about other competitors, instead of focusing on myself. Today I was just like a kid who was playing and that's how it should be.'

Reigning men's Olympic champion Benjamin Savsek confirmed his Paris selection when he qualified for Saturday's final and then followed up with silver behind Prskavec. France's Nicholas Gestin continued his strong start to the 2024 season with another bronze medal.

The 22 year old Satková had the biggest win of her career in a scrappy women's C1 final with the top three paddlers all attracting penalties for mistakes during their performances but Satková, urged on by the capacity home crowd, held her nerve to take the gold.

'The feeling is just incredible. I cannot believe I was able to do such a good run in front of my home crowd; it just feels great,' Satková said.

'I was actually pretty stressed because when my sister was going in front of me I heard the crowd cheering so much and the nerves; it just makes you stressed but I was also motivated to make sure I could also do a good run. It all went well and I can't believe it happened.

'The crowd here is so amazing and I'm so glad they came here to support us. Even the Czech President was here to support us, which is incredible.'

For the second day running Australia's Jessica Fox ruled herself out of a gold medal by picking up two gate touches and four seconds in penalties. Her raw time was the fastest of the final but she had to settle for silver.

Germany's Andrea Herzog, who took C1 bronze in Tokyo but would miss the Paris Games, finished third, also with a two second penalty.

France's Angele Hug and Spain's Manuel Ochoa both won in kayak cross on the final day but both then faced a nervous wait to learn if they would get to compete at the Paris Olympics.

Three kayak cross Games quotas were up for grabs in both the men's and the women's competition on Sunday with Spain, Germany and France earning the men's tickets and France, Australia and Great Britain taking the top three spots in the women's event.

The only certain Olympic starter from the six who earned quotas on the Sunday was Australia's Noemie Fox, who was set to join her sister, Jessica, in Paris.

Hug's win was not without controversy with Czech paddler Tereza Kneblova crossing the finish line first before being handed a late penalty for missing a gate. The decision dropped Kneblova from first to fourth and potentially out of an Olympic quota.

Hug's Olympic fate was then in the hands of the French selectors.

'It's a huge pleasure. I really wanted to perform well in kayak cross because I love this sport and it maybe means I'm not sure yet because we have to wait a decision but maybe the Olympics,' Hug said.

'We have to wait for the federation to decide who is the best boat to take to the Olympics. I felt really good today; it was amazing with all the team cheering for us. After the first heats I was really nervous and told myself to calm down.

'I would be so proud to be there (in Paris); all my family is there, all the French team, and it means a lot for me to compete at home. Even if someone else goes it will be a pleasure to support them.'

Fox said getting the chance to compete for Australia at the Olympics would be a dream come true.

'It's been a long road to get here and to be on the podium today,' Fox said.

'It's been like eight months that I've been dreaming about this day every day and visualizing it and really being so motivated to get to this race and be in the best physical and mental possible state. I'm just so proud of myself.'

Great Britain's Nikita Setchell finished third and by doing so had an Olympic quota on offer but, if they accepted it, it would mean either Kimberley Woods or Mallory Franklin would sit out the event in Paris.

If Great Britain decided not to accept the ticket it would be allocated to Czechia.

The Spanish federation also faced a difficult choice after Manuel Ochoa took the gold in the men's kayak cross final.

'I feel very happy, speechless actually, after many months of work to get the Olympic spot for my country and to take the gold medal is an awesome feeling,' Ochoa said.

'I'm so grateful for that. I felt very nervous; it was a very long race.

'I would love to go to the Olympics but we have a strong team in kayak cross so we will have a decision soon. It will be a technical decision but, whatever the decision is, it will be fair. We have one more World Cup in Kraków so maybe we will fight there.'



*Manuel Ochoa.*