



*Finn Butcher.*



*Mallory Franklin.*

'I wanted a good run to get myself a good spot on the ramp. Now I can see what the plan is for tomorrow but first I'll get some rest.

'In kayak cross you need to be in the moment; it never happens as you envisage so I will just try to be present and not make too many plans.'

Top seed Clarke would kick off the men's heats against Tunisia's Salim Jemai and Casey Eichfeld of the United States in race 1 at 16:40 CET.

Goncalves would face China's Xin Quan and Amir Rezanejad Hassanjani of the International Olympic Committee Refugee Olympic team in race 2.

Twists, turns, thrills, spills and a delightful dose of crashes gripped a packed crowd as kayak cross announced its arrival at the Olympic Games.

The Vaires-sur-Marne nautical stadium was rocking as thousands of fans enjoyed a spectacular day of kayak cross action.

There was not a spare seat in the stands as the event was presented on the biggest stage in sport for the first time.

Kayak cross was making its much anticipated debut at the Olympics with round one and repêchage races taking place on Saturday.

The noise levels increased when French paddlers were introduced on the start ramp before slashing onto the water.

Camille Prigent, who was the fastest female in Friday's time trials, was the first of the home favourites to go as she won her round one race.

Angele Hug was also in flying form as she swept into the Sunday heats with an impressive performance.

'The nerves this morning were bad and then I had a little nap,' said Hug.

'When I finally saw my friends and family I was okay.

'I tried to be fast at the beginning to be alone for the rest of the race.

'Tomorrow it could be different but we will see.'

Most were rewarded for fast starts with French stars Boris Neveu and Titouan Castryck powering home to win their respective races.

Castryck even had time to showboat before crossing the finish line as he turned to celebrate with the French fans.

'I had nothing behind me so I just looked at the crowd and my boat turned around so I just wanted to enjoy the moment,' said Castryck.

Other top performers included Australia's Noemie Fox and reigning world champions Kimberley Woods and Joseph Clarke.

'Job done for today; just try to get through the first, put the burners on for the first 20 or 30 seconds and then just ease off and save the arms for tomorrow,' said Clarke.

'That's kind of like my super strength is that start, those first few strokes getting the power down and hopefully I can keep deploying that through the rounds and I think from any lane I can get ahead.

Ana Satila, Klaudia Zwolinska, Jiri Prskavec, Benjamin Savsek and Adam Burgess needed another race to seal their places in the heats after dropping into the repêchages.

Noemie Fox advanced to the quarter finals of the women's kayak cross as her sister Jessica's hopes of a golden hat trick at the Paris 2024 Olympics were over.

All eyes were on heat three on Sunday as the Fox sisters faced each other in a tough race that included experienced paddlers Martina Wegman of the Netherlands and Maialen Chourraut of Spain.

Jessica, bidding for a third gold in Paris after her success in canoe and kayak, was a double world champion in kayak cross that was making its Olympic debut but she was left chasing after falling behind following the ramp start as Noemie forged ahead.

While Noemie extended her lead, Jessica overtook Wegman and looked to get the better of Chourraut but a mistake at gate eight saw her chances end as Chourraut and Noemie went through.

'I didn't pull out my best race and it was really tough off the start as I got really tangled with the other two girls,' said Jessica.

'Noemie had a really good start so I was trying to chase from that moment.

'I climbed up one spot and I almost pulled off the overtake in the last upstream gate but that's kayak cross and sometimes nothing goes to plan.

'I'm absolutely gutted but at the same time when you see your little sister win the heat the emotion went straight away and I gave her a massive hug as I was really proud of her.'

Jessica said it had been a 'dream Games' and would now be screaming for Noemie as she went in search of glory.

'It was really hard to be lined up with Jess,' said Noemie.

'We always knew it was going to be as we didn't want to knock either one of us out. The goal was to get the two Australians through as far as possible and it would have been great to meet later on and do a final together.'

Home favourite Camille Prigent continued her impressive form as she stormed to top spot in heat one, qualifying along with Algeria's Carole Diana Bouzidi.

Mallory Franklin and Kimberley Woods also led from start to finish as they cruised into the quarter finals.

Ana Satila, who came through the repêchage on the Saturday, progressed after finishing second behind France's Angele Hug.

Luuka Jones and Ricarda Funk qualified from heat four while Evy Leibfarth edged Switzerland's Alena Marx in a thrilling race as they both went through.

The other paddlers advancing to the quarter finals were Elena Lilik, Stefanie Horn, Andorra's Monica Doria Vilarrubla and Ukraine's Viktoriia Us.

There was more French delight in the men's kayak cross heats as Boris Neveu and Titouan Castryck won their respective races.

'Every day is really a joy to start at this stadium so I am just enjoying it so much and I hope it will continue like that,' said Castryck.

'We'll look at the other competitors, especially for the starting place on the run, and we'll adapt a lot of the race plan because of that.'

Reigning world champion Joseph Clarke swept into the quarter finals along with Slovakia's Jakub Grigar in the opening heat.

'Back here tomorrow, hopefully three runs tomorrow and rinse repeat for three of them,' said Clarke.

'I'd be foolish to think it will be that easy but three runs tomorrow is the aim of the game and challenge for those medals in that final round.'

Jiri Prskavec and Manuel Ochoa made it through in heat two with newly crowned Olympic kayak champion Giovanni de Gennaro and Mateusz Polaczyk progressing from heat four.

Pedro Goncalves was faulted on gate two as Finn Butcher and Benjamin Savsek sealed the two quarter final spots from heat five.

Australian duo Timothy Anderson and Tristan Carter continued their kayak cross campaigns while Noah Hegge, Poland's Grzegorz Hedwig, Czechia's Lukas Rohan and Martin Dougoud also advanced.

Noemie Fox and Finn Butcher etched their names in Olympic canoeing history by becoming the first ever kayak cross gold medallists.

Monday's triumph at a sweltering Vaires-sur-Marne nautical stadium capped a golden Games for the Fox family with Noemie following the success of sister Jessica, who had already captured the kayak and canoe