



*Vladyslav Yepifanov.*



*Eyres in V1.*

been working on doing that in training and I am pleased to get a good run under my belt.

'I haven't had a hit out against the full field but good to have put down a solid performance and one that I was pretty happy with.'

Henshaw's chief challenge for the women's KL2 crown looked set to come from Hungary's Katalin Varga, who won the other heat.

It was poised to be an all British battle between Henshaw and Hope Gordon for the women's VL3 title after they both topped their heats.

Great Britain enjoyed a strong day with Emma Wiggs and Laura Sugar launching the defences of their respective women's VL2 and women's KL3 titles.

Wiggs was commanding in her heat as she aimed for a third successive women's VL2 gold while Canada's Brianna Hennessy also qualified for the final.

Sugar was expected to face a test from home favourite Nelia Barbosa in the final after they came out on top in their heats.

Hungary's Peter Kiss was another defending champion in the field and he saw off France's Remy Boullé in his heat in the men's KL1.

'It was great but a very tough race,' said Kiss.

'It was a little bit windy. I didn't expect this.

'The time is not very good but maybe in the final I can do better.

'I think Remy Boullé will be faster in the final so I need more rest to compete tomorrow.

'I have a lot of confidence because my family and friends are here cheering for me so I feel the motivation.'

Brazil's Luis Carlos Cardoso da Silva won the other men's KL1 heat while fellow countrymen Fernando Rufino de Paulo and Igor Alex Tofalini look primed to go head to head for the men's VL2 crown after putting in dominant displays.

Chile's Katherine Wollermann and Ukraine's Maryna Mazhula were the top performers in the women's KL1 heats while Spain's Juan Antonio Valle and Australia's Dylan Littlehales qualified for the men's KL3 final.

Algeria's Brahim Guendouz captured Africa's first ever paracanoe gold medal on a historic day of racing.

Guendouz, who was part of the International Canoe Federation's development programme, marked Algeria's Paralympic debut in the sport with gold in the men's KL3 after a thrilling final.

History was also made by Curtis McGrath, who extended his record gold medal tally to four with victory in the men's KL2.

Charlotte Henshaw became the first ever winner of the women's VL3 at the Games while her team mate, Emma Wiggs, made it three women's VL2 titles in a row.

Peter Kiss was the other gold medallist, clinching the men's KL1 crown for a second successive Paralympics.

After five of the 10 events, all five continents have picked up at least one medal to underline the globalization of paracanoe, which first featured at Rio 2016.

Guendouz etched his name in African paracanoe history with his stunning triumph as the continent had previously not won a medal.

Senegal's Edmond Sanka was the other African in the final as he placed fifth behind Dylan Littlehales in silver and Brazil's Miqueias Elias Rodrigues in bronze.

Guendouz hoped his success and Sanka's presence in the final would inspire more African paddlers to follow their path.

'It's incredible, to be honest, and I know this medal will make a big jump in my country and Africa generally to develop our sport,' said Guendouz.

'I know there are a lot of talented athletes right there but they are waiting for the right moment and right opportunity.

'If they have the right people, as I have, they will be in the same place that I am sitting in right now.

'This is Algeria's first participation and first gold medal.

'I know that in the next years our sport will be developed more and especially in Africa because there are a lot of goods athletes over there.

'We have two Africans in the final and that is something to be proud of.'

Guendouz started paracanoe in 2017 and joined the ICF's Talent Identification Programme in 2019.

He won Africa's first ever world medal in 2023 and has been training in Spain since February thanks to an International Paralympic Committee development grant which the ICF successfully secured.

'I have been preparing in Seville with the Spanish Paralympic team and that helped me a lot to be in the elite level,' said the 25 year old.

'In my country I am the only paracanoe athlete and I don't have a lot of competitors.



*Emma Wiggs.*



*Laura Sugar.*