Paddle Europe Monthly · August 2026 Edition



1. OPENING

August 2026

August has once again demonstrated the strength and diversity of European paddlesport. From the next generation competing for European titles in Canoe Slalom and Wildwater Canoeing to Europe's leading Ocean Racing athletes taking on the Atlantic coast, another busy month of competition has brought together athletes and National Federations from across the continent.

Beyond the medals, August also delivered stories that show the depth of European paddlesport: young athletes making their mark, long careers still reaching new milestones and personal journeys that remind us why people keep returning to the water.

In this edition of Paddle Europe Monthly, we look back at the key moments of August, celebrate remarkable stories from within our community, assess Europe's performance on

the world stage and look ahead to another exciting month of European Championships in September.

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2. AUGUST CHAMPIONSHIPS

August Championships

2026 Paddle Europe Junior & Under 23 Canoe Slalom Championships — Épinal

Épinal, France hosted Europe's next generation of canoe slalom stars, with 24 European titles decided across kayak, canoe, team events and Kayak Cross. Twelve nations reached the podium during the Championships.

France finished at the top of the medal table with seven gold medals, while Czechia collected the highest number of medals overall with 18. Germany completed the top three with five gold medals and 12 medals overall.

One athlete stood above the rest. Czechia's Valentýna Kočířová finished Épinal as the most decorated athlete of the Championships, winning an extraordinary six medals — four gold and two silver. She became individual European champion in three different disciplines — K1, C1 and Kayak Cross — while also contributing to Czechia's Junior Women K1 Team title.

> Top 3 Nations — France: 7 Gold | Czechia: 6 Gold | Germany: 5 Gold
> Championships at a Glance — 24 European titles • 72 medals • 12 nations on the podium • Kočířová: 6 medals / 4 European titles

Official Results | Read the Full Story



2026 Paddle Europe Junior & Under 23 Wildwater Canoeing Championships — Grandtully

Grandtully, Scotland welcomed athletes from 19 National Federations for four days of racing on the River Tay, with 41 European titles decided across Classic and Sprint individual and team events. The Championships showcased both sides of Wildwater Canoeing, from the demanding 4.3-kilometre Classic course to the explosive 500-metre Sprint through the Grandtully Rapids.

France led the medal standings throughout the Classic competition, but an exceptional final day from Czechia completely changed the picture. Nine Czech gold medals on the final Saturday moved the nation to the top of the final medal table with 13 golds and 34 medals overall. France finished just one gold behind and collected the highest number of medals overall with 36, while Germany completed the top three.

Individually, France’s Dimitri Tostain produced one of the performances of the Championships, finishing with five European titles from five medals across Classic and Sprint. Czechia’s Jachym Hanzel and Anna Retkova both collected seven medals, while Valerie Capska won four European titles on the final day alone. Home success also came through Scotland’s Kerry and Emma Christie, who completed the Women’s C2 U23 Classic and Sprint double.

> Final Medal Table
> Czechia: 13 Gold | 11 Silver | 10 Bronze — 34
> France: 12 Gold | 12 Silver | 12 Bronze — 36
> Germany: 5 Gold | 3 Silver | 2 Bronze — 10
>
> Championships at a Glance

> 41 European titles • 19 National Federations • 10 nations on the podium • Tostain: 5 European titles

Official Results | Read the Full Story



2026 Paddle Europe Ocean Racing Championships — Brest

Brest, France provided a spectacular setting for the 2026 Paddle Europe Ocean Racing Championships, with 11 European titles ultimately decided across SS1 and SS2 racing. The Championships combined a demanding 23-kilometre individual SS1 course with a fast 13-kilometre downwind SS2 finale, showcasing two very different sides of Ocean Racing on the Brittany coast.

Portugal finished at the top of the final medal table with four European titles, three of them belonging to Bernardo Pereira. The Portuguese paddler produced one of the outstanding performances of Brest 2026, winning the Senior Men and U23 Men SS1 titles before returning alongside Sara Sotero to claim Senior Mixed SS2 gold.

Spain collected the highest number of medals overall with 14, reaching the podium in 10 of the 11 official Championship events, while Great Britain completed the top three.

Great Britain’s Rosie Edwards was another standout performer, becoming both Senior Women and U23 Women European Champion through her victory in the overall women’s SS1 race. Portugal’s Constança Frazão and Italy’s Leonardo Candela took the Junior SS1 titles, while Spain finished the Championships strongly by winning both the U23 Mixed and Junior Mixed SS2 European titles.

> Final Medal Table
> Portugal: 4 Gold | 1 Silver | 1 Bronze — 6
> Spain: 2 Gold | 5 Silver | 7 Bronze — 14
> Great Britain: 2 Gold | 0 Silver | 2 Bronze — 4
> Championships at a Glance 11 European titles • 33 medals • 7 nations on the podium
> • Pereira: 3 European titles • Edwards: 2 European titles

Official Results | Read the Full Story



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3. STORIES BEYOND COMPETITION

Stories Beyond Competition

Athlete Spotlight — Valentýna Kočířová

Six medals. Four European titles. Three disciplines. And still only 17.

Valentýna Kočířová left Épinal as the most decorated athlete of the 2026 Paddle Europe Junior & Under 23 Canoe Slalom Championships, reaching the podium in every one of the six events she contested and becoming individual European champion in K1, C1 and Kayak Cross.

But her remarkable week in France was only the latest chapter in a rapid rise through European and world canoe slalom. Just weeks earlier in Krakow, the Czech paddler had

taken individual World Championship silver in those same three disciplines. In Épinal, three World silvers became three European golds.

With no family background in canoeing, Kočířová has built her own pathway through SKUP Olomouc and the highly competitive Czech system. Already racing successfully against senior athletes at home, her performances in 2026 suggest that this may only be the beginning.

Read Valentýna Kočířová's Full Story

#IPaddleForEurope — The Stories Behind Our Sport

On World Canoeing Day, Paddle Europe invited its community to share what paddling means to them through #IPaddleForEurope. The aim was simple: to go beyond competition and results and give a voice to the people whose lives have been shaped by our sport.

One of the stories we received came from Spanish paddlesport veteran Francisco Javier Martínez Vesga, "Musku" — and it was much more than a memory.

Javier discovered canoeing in 1967, aged 11, while watching the first International Bidasoa River Canoe Descent alongside his father. Almost six decades later, his journey has taken him from Spanish national athlete in Sprint, Wildwater and Slalom to International Technical Official at three Olympic Games, coach and official at countless international competitions.

Now 70, Javier remains actively involved in canoeing. 59 years after that first encounter on the banks of the Bidasoa, his story perfectly reflects what #IPaddleForEurope was created to celebrate: not only where paddling takes us, but the people we meet, the lives we touch and the reasons we keep coming back to the water.

> Discover Javier's full story on the official Paddle Europe Facebook page.

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4. EUROPE ON THE WORLD STAGE

Europe on the World Stage

Europe Dominates in Poznań

European paddlers once again demonstrated the continent's strength at the 2026 Canoe Sprint and Paracanoe World Championships in Poznań. Across the 36 World Championship events, European athletes collected 71 medals — 26 gold, 20 silver and 25 bronze — representing 65.1% of all medals awarded.

The dominance was even stronger in Canoe Sprint, where Europe claimed 53 of the 73 medals available and 19 of the 25 gold medals. Germany topped the Sprint medal table with five world titles, while Hungary collected the highest number of Sprint medals with 12. In Paracanoe, Great Britain led the standings with four gold medals.

Read the Full Poznań Story



Fernando Pimenta — Another Place in History

At the centre of Poznań's remarkable stories was Fernando Pimenta. At 37, the Portuguese paddler once again demonstrated extraordinary longevity at the highest level, adding another chapter to a World Championship career that began with his first senior medal on these same waters in 2010.

His performance in the K1 Men 1000m carried particular historical significance. Pimenta arrived in Poznań already sharing the all-time record of eight World Championship medals in the event with Norwegian legend Knut Holmann, while also having the opportunity to extend his remarkable record as one of the oldest athletes ever to reach the podium in the Olympic K1 1000m.

He then closed the Championships in spectacular fashion, winning the K1 Men 5000m World title and taking his career total to 22 Canoe Sprint World Championship medals — seven gold, nine silver and six bronze. That moved him alongside Lisa Carrington, Maxim

Opalev, Andreas Dittmer, Ivan Patzaichin and Josefa Idem on 22 medals, while making him one of only three active athletes inside the all-time top 20.

Sixteen years after winning his first senior World Championship medal in Poznań, Pimenta left the same venue with another world title and his place among Canoe Sprint's most decorated athletes further strengthened.

Discover Pimenta's Historic Milestone

More Stories from Poznań

Martin Fuksa — From Five Silvers to the Record Books

Martin Fuksa added another remarkable chapter to his career in Poznań. After collecting five C1 Men 1000m World Championship silver medals between 2015 and 2022, the Czech star has now won the event four consecutive times — 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026. His latest victory, shared with Hungary's Daniel Fejes after both crossed the line in exactly 4:07.44, saw Fuksa equal a record that had stood for more than three decades.

Read the Story

Liudmyla Luzan

Liudmyla Luzan continued an extraordinary season by successfully defending her C1 Women 200m world title. After winning four European titles in Montemor-o-Velho in June, the Ukrainian became the first European woman ever to win consecutive C1 200m World Championship titles.

Read the Story

Pauline Jagsch

Pauline Jagsch completed a remarkable circle in Poznań. Eight years after making her international debut at the same venue, the 23-year-old German became K1 Women 500m World Champion. She also completed a European-World double in 2026, having won the same Olympic event at the Paddle Europe Championships in June.

Read the Story

Three Races, Three Stories

The 200-metre races produced three very different stories. Poland's Oleksii Koliadych captured his third C1 200m world title; Italy's Andrea Domenico Di Liberto returned to the top of the K1 200m podium five years after his first world crown; and Serbia's Marko Dragosavljević, at 31, finally won his first senior World Championship medal after a 13-year wait.

Read the Story

Frederikke Hauge Mørcke

Denmark also found a new champion in Frederikke Hauge Mørcke. Five years after Emma Jørgensen became Denmark's first K1 Women 200m World Champion, her former K2 World Championship partner became the second. Mørcke also completed her own European-World double after winning the K1 200m European title in Montemor-o-Velho in June.

Read the Story

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5. SEPTEMBER AHEAD

September Ahead

European SUP Returns — Agios Nikolaos 2026

European Stand Up Paddling returns to the spotlight from 18–20 September, when Agios Nikolaos, Crete hosts the 2026 Paddle Europe Stand Up Paddling Championships.

Only the second edition of the European Championships, Agios Nikolaos represents another major step forward following the inaugural event in Szeged in 2024. European titles will be contested across Sprint, Technical and Long Distance, with an expanded programme covering Junior, Open, Masters 40+ and Masters 50+ categories, together with National Team Events.

The international field continues to grow rapidly. With entries still open, 231 athletes are already registered, including paddlers representing 18 European countries, alongside athletes from outside Europe and Individual Neutral Athletes. The field includes reigning World Champions, World Championship medallists and several athletes who made history at the first Paddle Europe SUP Championships two years ago.

Following the three European Championship days, Agios Nikolaos will remain at the centre of international SUP with the ICF SUP World Cup, creating five days of high-level international competition across the combined programme.

> 18 September — Sprint • 19 September — Technical • 20 September — Long Distance

Entries are still open, go here to register today.

Senior Canoe Slalom Returns to Ivrea

Europe’s leading Canoe Slalom and Kayak Cross athletes will head to Italy in September for the 2026 Paddle Europe Canoe Slalom Championships, one of the major senior events of the European paddlesport season.

The Championships will take place at the iconic Ivrea Canoe Stadium, located in the heart of the city and recognised as one of the most technical and demanding whitewater courses on the international circuit. Following five days of official training, competition will begin on 24 September, bringing together Europe’s best paddlers in Canoe Slalom and Kayak Cross.

The provisional programme will see the Championships open with K1 and C1 heats and the four Canoe Slalom Team events, followed by the individual K1 and C1 semi-finals and finals.

The Championships will then conclude with something particularly special. The decisive Kayak Cross races will take place at night, under artificial lighting illuminating the whitewater course. This unusual setting for a major international Canoe Slalom competition promises to create a spectacular atmosphere in the heart of Ivrea and a memorable finale to the European Championships.

With Ivrea's strong canoeing heritage and extensive experience hosting major international events, the venue is ready to provide another demanding test for Europe's leading athletes — with a unique night-time finale adding a new dimension to the 2026 Championships.

24–26 September • Canoe Slalom • Team Events • Kayak Cross • Night Racing

Entries still open, go to SDP to make your NF registration