PADDLE EUROPE

Paddle Europe Monthly · September 2026 Edition



1. OPENING

A Strong Finish to the European Season

September brought another memorable month of European paddlesport, with two major Paddle Europe Championships bringing together athletes from across the continent in very different settings.

In Agios Nikolaos, Europe’s Stand Up Paddling community returned to the European Championship stage for only the second time, with three days of racing on the waters of Crete. Just days later, attention turned to Ivrea, where Europe’s leading Canoe Slalom and Kayak Cross athletes competed for the final major continental titles of the season.

From established champions to new names emerging on the European stage, both Championships delivered outstanding performances and memorable moments as another

busy international season approached its conclusion.

In this edition of Paddle Europe Monthly, we look back at the highlights and stories from Agios Nikolaos and Ivrea, explore the work being done through the Paddle Europe Development Programme, preview one of the final events of 2026 and turn our attention towards the 2027 season.



2. SEPTEMBER CHAMPIONSHIPS

European SUP Championships — Agios Nikolaos

The 2026 Paddle Europe Stand Up Paddling Championships brought Europe's SUP community to Agios Nikolaos, Crete, for three days of racing across Sprint, Technical and Long Distance.

The second edition of the Championships attracted 163 European athletes representing 20 countries, alongside Individual Neutral Athletes, with 432 individual entries across the programme. From the explosive Sprint races to the technical battles and the final Long Distance test, Agios Nikolaos provided a spectacular setting for the continued growth of SUP within Paddle Europe.

At the centre of the Championships was Italy's Cecilia Pampinella, who produced a perfect campaign in the Open Women category. After taking the Sprint title on the opening day and adding Technical gold, Pampinella completed the golden sweep by winning the Long Distance title on the final day — leaving Crete with three European titles from three events.

Portugal’s Lourenço Viveiros was another standout performer, winning an extraordinarily close Junior Men Sprint final by just 0.014 seconds before adding the Technical title the following day. Denmark’s Christian Andersen successfully defended his Open Men Technical title, while Romania’s Matei Barbu stepped up from Junior World Championship silver in 2025 to become Open Men Sprint European Champion.

> Championships at a Glance — 163 European athletes • 20 European countries + AIN • 432 individual entries • Sprint, Technical & Long Distance • Pampinella: 3 Open European titles

Read the Final Championship Report

Canoe Slalom European Championships — Ivrea

Europe’s leading Canoe Slalom athletes gathered at the iconic Stadio della Canoa in Ivrea for three intense days of racing, with 185 athletes representing 28 delegations and 12 European titles decided across team events, traditional slalom and Kayak Cross.

The individual slalom finals produced four different European champions. Poland’s Klaudia Zwolinska returned to the top of the European podium in Women’s K1, while reigning World Champion Jakub Krejci added the Men’s K1 European crown to his 2026 World title.

In C1, Great Britain’s Mallory Franklin produced one of the closest victories of the Championships, defeating France’s Doriane Delassus by just 0.03 seconds. France then celebrated again as Yohann Senechault claimed the Men’s C1 European title.

Kayak Cross added another dimension to the final day. Kimberley Woods and Olympic champion Giovanni De Gennaro took the Women’s and Men’s Kayak Cross Individual titles before the competition moved into the head-to-head elimination rounds.

France ultimately finished at the top of the medal table with 3 gold, 4 silver and 2 bronze medals. Czechia followed with three golds and seven medals, while host nation Italy matched France’s Championship-high total of nine medals and won two European titles. Eight nations appeared on the final medal table.

> Championships at a Glance — 185 athletes • 28 delegations • 12 European titles • 8 nations on the medal table • France tops the medal table • France & Italy: 9 medals each

Read the Ivrea 2026 Recap



SPECIAL FEATURE

Under the Lights

A Night-Time Finale for Kayak Cross

For the first time in Ivrea, the decisive stages of a major championship Kayak Cross competition moved into the night. As darkness fell over the Stadio della Canoa, the course was transformed by artificial lighting for the quarterfinals, semifinals and finals, creating a completely different setting for the final European titles of the 2026 Championships.

The racing delivered a finale to match the atmosphere. Tereza Kneblova survived every stage of the Women's competition to become European champion ahead of Mallory Franklin and Klaudia Zwolinska. In the Men's final, Matyas Novak took control early and opened a decisive advantage to claim gold ahead of France's Mathurin Madore and Ianis Triomphe.

With the final races taking place under the artificial lights and the European titles decided late into the evening, Kayak Cross provided a spectacular conclusion to three days of competition in Ivrea — and a memorable way to bring the major Paddle Europe Championship season towards its close.

Relive the Night-Time Finale

3. DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION

From Crete to Kraków: Investing in European Paddlesport

Behind every European Championship is the long-term work required to help athletes develop, gain experience and take the next step in their sporting journey. Throughout 2026, the Paddle Europe Development Programme continued to support this process by creating opportunities for athletes to access specialist coaching, new training environments and international experience.

SUP Development in Agios Nikolaos

In September, Paddle Europe organised its first Athlete SUP Development Camp in Agios Nikolaos, Crete, on 17–18 September, immediately ahead of the European Championships.

The two-day camp combined practical and theoretical sessions, with particular attention given to open-water safety, technical development and the responsibilities of athletes and instructors when training in changing water conditions. Participants worked on identifying water hazards and rip currents, understanding wave conditions, safe escape techniques, environmental awareness and communication, alongside technical SUP training.

Holding the camp immediately before the European Championships also gave the participating athletes the opportunity to learn and develop in the same environment that would shortly welcome Europe’s leading SUP paddlers for three days of continental competition.

Learning on the Whitewater in Kraków

Earlier in the season, the Paddle Europe Development Programme was also active in Canoe Slalom, with a Development Training Camp held in Kraków alongside the Junior and

U23 international competition period.

Under the guidance of coaches Natalia Pacierpnik and Krzysztof Książek, the camp gave young athletes the opportunity to train on more demanding whitewater, experience different coaching perspectives and work on specific technical areas through focused feedback and repetition.

For athletes from countries where regular access to challenging slalom courses is limited, this kind of opportunity can be particularly important. Training in Kraków allowed them to build confidence on more demanding water while developing a better understanding of the technical requirements of competing at European level.

> “Programmes of this kind do more than improve technical skills. They build confidence, broaden athletes’ experience, strengthen cooperation between countries and contribute to the future development of canoe slalom across Europe.”
>
> — Natalia Pacierpnik & Krzysztof Książek

From open water in Crete to whitewater in Kraków, the environments and disciplines may have been very different, but the objective remained the same: creating opportunities for athletes to learn, progress and continue raising the level of paddlesport across Europe.

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4. COMING NEXT

Europe’s Canoe Polo Clubs Head to Milan

The European season is not quite over yet.

From 2–4 October, Milan will welcome the 2026 Paddle Europe Canoe Polo Club Championships, bringing together leading European clubs for three days of competition and another major continental title battle.

Unlike the European Championships between national teams, the Club Championships put Europe’s club sides at the centre of the action, offering a different dimension to international Canoe Polo as teams compete for European honours under their club colours.

With European titles still to be decided, Milan provides one more chapter in the 2026 Paddle Europe season before attention begins to turn towards 2027.

Championship Information

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5. LOOKING AHEAD

The 2027 Paddle Europe Season Takes Shape

As the 2026 season approaches its conclusion, the next chapter of European paddlesport is already taking shape.

Paddle Europe has unveiled its major events calendar for 2027, with continental competition running from May to September across Canoe Slalom, Canoe Sprint, Paracanoe, Canoe Marathon, Wildwater and Canoe Polo. Canoe Sprint will also feature on two major multi-sport stages: the European Games in Istanbul and the European Youth Olympic Festival in Lignano.

The season will begin in Krakow, Poland, where Europe's leading Canoe Slalom athletes return from 20–23 May. From there, the calendar will travel across the continent, combining some of European canoeing's most established venues with new destinations.

Among them is Mirandela, which will become a new Portuguese home for the Canoe Marathon European Championships, while Tacen will host the Junior & U23 Slalom Europeans for the first time. Wildwater returns to Mezzana, and the season will conclude in Thury-Harcourt, exactly 20 years after the French venue last hosted the Canoe Polo European Championships.

There will also be a special connection between generations in Lignano. Twenty-two years after hosting the 2005 European Youth Olympic Festival — where a young Fernando Pimenta was among the competitors — Canoe Sprint will return to the Italian venue for the 2027 edition.

One piece of the calendar is still to be completed: following Serbia's withdrawal as organiser, a new host is being secured for the Paracanoe, Junior & U23 and Masters Sprint Championships, which remain scheduled for 10–13 June.

> 2027 at a Glance — May → September • Slalom • Sprint • Paracanoe • Marathon • Wildwater • Canoe Polo • European Games • European Youth Olympic Festival

Explore the 2027 Major Events Calendar

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