

**REPORT OF THE ECA WWC DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM AT THE ECA JUNIOR & U23 EUROPEAN  
CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024**

IN DALLENWIL, SWITZERLAND  
29.6-7.7. 2024

## 1. Participants

A total of 15 athletes from countries such as Ukraine, Romania, Kosovo and Lithuania participated in the development programme. Five Ukrainien paddlers, six Lithuanians, two Kosovans, two Romanians.

All athletes were taken care of with the help of two head coaches and several assistants from the organizing team. The coaches were responsible for running training sessions, boat repairs and hospitality.

Name	Gender	Country	Category
Railaite Kamile	Female	LTU	K1W JUN, C2W U23
Gauryte Vytaute	Female	LTU	C1W U23, C2W U23
Lisovska Maria	Female	UKR	K1W U23
Starovoitov Artem	Male	UKR	C1M U23
Kharakhursakh Damir	Male	UKR	K1M JUN
Malovanyi Bohdan	Male	UKR	K1M U23
Kasatskyi Denis	Male	UKR	K1M JUN
Balidemaj Kron	Male	KOS	K1M JUN
Balidemaj Eris	Male	KOS	K1M JUN
Grubys Dovydas	Male	LTU	K1M JUN
Zadeikis Gytis	Male	LTU	K1M JUN
Simoliunas Tomas	Male	LTU	K1M U23
Bruzas Eligijus	Male	LTU	K1M U23
Olar Matteo Alexander	Male	ROU	K1M U23, C2M U23
Kozma Patrik	Male	ROU	K1M U23, C2M U23
Plachtová Alexandra	Female	CZE	COACH
Janiszewski Robert	Male	AUS	COACH

In total there were three women, twelve men, seven junior athletes and eight U23 athletes in the development team.

Most of the athletes came from the canoe slalom background. The Lithuanian paddlers on the other hand are the canoe sprint paddlers.

Thanks to these athletes, the European Championships were hosting 19 countries in total.

## 2. Venue

The athletes were about to compete in classic race (5,5 km, circa 20 minutes) and sprint race (300 m, circa 1 minute) on the river Engelberger Aa.

The situation there was a little bit complicated and challenging for the development athletes due to the higher water level. Especially during the first days and the days when the classic races were taking place.

The camp started on 29.6., several equipment divisions and check had to be done before the first paddling experience for the athletes. On 29. and 30.6. was just for the flat water paddling sessions on the lake nearby. It was usefull for the paddlers who came from the canoe sprint backround.

On the 1.7. every athlete arrived to Dallenwil and so it was the plan to go and paddle the classic course. Unfortunately, the river got even higher, more wild and very tricky to handle. Several capsizing and eskymo rolling had been done. One of the Lithuanian girl hurted her shoulder, so she was relaxing the next two days.

Coaches weren't pushing the athletes when it was obvious that they were scared. The plan was to rather wait for the water to get lower and practise again on the lake. But for some of them, there was still the time to keep the training on the river.

Coaches made sure that every athlete would start the sprint event due to the lighter rapids even with higher water level.

### **3. Accomodation**

The whole crew (athletes and coaches) were sleeping in one of the underground bunker facilities 10 mins from the racing course. They were living there also with the Teams from Great Britain, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Serbia, Netherlands, North Macedonia and Croatia. Because of this shared accommodation, the inclusion of the „new“ paddlers went fast (from the coaches point of view).

The coaches secured everyday breakfast (the shopping and preparing) and for the lunches and dinners, the catering services from the organizers were used.

### **4. Equipment**

Several boats, paddles, helmets, life jackets were borrowed from the Kanu Klub Nidwalden from Buochs. Ukrainian paddlers were mostly prepared with the borrowed equipment from the Czech Canoe Team.

So as the equipment, also a place for the boat reparation was provided by the Kanu Klub Nidwalden. This place had been used for most of the evenings, because of necessary boats reparaitons. Unfortunately, two boats were completely destroyed during their free floating time in the river after tha paddler capsizing. One of the boat were from Czech Canoe Team and the other from the Swiss Team. The compenzations for this boats are still in question and will be dealed in the short future.

This unfortunate situation maybe could not happened if there would be more experienced rescuers and divided on more places along the course. But on the other hand, due to the high water level it was objectively very hard to catch a floating boat and get it to the shore.

## 5. Results

Here is the link for the results from the various events:

<https://dallenwil2024.ch/resultate>

Many ups and downs in general, but some history-making results are worth for the note in this report:

- 1st ever 3x KM U23 UKR team (12th in classic, 12th in sprint)
- 1st ever 3x K1M U23 LTU team (13th in sprint)
- 1st ever C2W U23 LTU (made it to the finals in sprint, but unfortunately DNF in the final)

## 6. Conclusion

To conclude this development part of the Junior&U23 European Championships, the outstanding number of participants were succesfull. Atheltes were trying their best even though the weather conditions, the river conditions and maybe for some of them the bunker conditions weren't ideal. Some of the athletes were facing fear from the capsizing and swimming.

The venue was harder in comparism of the past five Europeans, but only due to the huge precipitation in the whole Switzerland at the time. Otherwise it would be much more managable for the athletes, coaches and rescuers.

The aim of this development program was to energized more young paddlers to practise or keep practising wildwater in their home clubs. To start the way of preparation for another Junior&U23 event, to think about the team races and to build the structure between them and their coaches and clubs. This is not easy to evaluate now, rather during the next season at the Junior&U23 World Championships in Solkan (SLO).

Many thanks to the Swiss organizers and their fantastic work in Dallenwil.

