**PRESS RELEASE - 16th May 2019**

**Slalom and Head to Head don’t disappoint**

Today saw sleek moves and great clashes on the Tully River as the second day of competition of the 2019 IRF World Rafting Championship, powered by Experience Co. rolled on by.

The crowds were roaring as junior teams (U19 and U23) hit the Tully River to compete in the slalom discipline. The winner is determined by the team who can navigate the course of slalom poles with the least amount of touches and misses combined with a fast time. Whilst Open and Master teams battled it out in the head to head in the afternoon. Competitors and spectators filled the banks of the river to support and cheer on each team.

The gates of 5, 6 and 7 proved very tricky for the teams, making gate 5 often meant the raft was poorly lines up for the next two gates. It was New Zealand U23 Men’s team who tamed the Tully River today by taking first place followed by Czechia and Australia.

Indonesia U23 Women showed their competitors just how to weave through those slalom gates and, although they struggled at some of the gates they still did it well enough to place first followed by Great Britain and Japan.

Czechia U19 Men’s team had a brilliant run with only 15 secs in penalties, the lowest of the day, which resulted in the fastest time of the day of 221.87 secs. This placed them in a convincing 1st place, 40.89 seconds ahead of Australia who flipped their raft adding additional time to their final score. Indonesia took third.

Coach of the U19 Australian Mens Team – Mark Miller said, “Overall our first run which we were planning on went down like a treat. Our second run we tried the same plan again and we flipped! But it was all good, no-one injuries, just a few laughs. It was good to get a good result on the first run.”

The afternoon saw the Open and Master division’s teams tackle the Head-to-Head. This sees teams battle it out one on one over the Sprint course in a knockout format, but this time with buoy navigation mandatory. Contact is permitted as long as not considered dangerous. This sees great tactics being used by teams as they try get ahead as they negotiate the buoy. The crowds were well entertained with great clashes at the last buoy on river right. Some fierce tussles were fought right in front of them keeping them enervated and excited by the action. If you’ve seen BoaterX - increase the contact and obstacles and you’ll understand Head-to-Head.

In the Masters Women’s final the local crowd were delighted by an Australian Gold medal, with Costa Rica taking Silver. There are some very experienced racers in the Master Men category – namely Japan MM who had the fastest times of all teams at WRC 2017 in Japan, and they proved their abilities again by taking the Gold. They beat the Czechia team, also an extremely experienced team, and to the delight of the crowd, Australia took the final podium position.

Some interesting tactics were used by some teams, and many were well entertained by New Zealand Open Men’s team’s wild tactic to get ahead of Japan at the third buoy. This failed and Japan went on to take the Silver, beaten by an excellent team from China, who were racing in their first ever WRC. Third place was taken by Russia. The Open Women saw the continuously excellent New Zealand Open Women taking the top honours, Japan in second and last year’s World Champions, Czechia, taking third.

Racing continues tomorrow with Slalom for the Open and Master’s categories, while the U19 and U23 teams get a well-deserved day off.

[Results and media](https://www.internationalrafting.com/events-2/events/wrc-2019-australia/)

For further information visit [www.wrc2019.com](http://www.wrc2019.com/), or follow us on Facebook (@IRFWorldRaftingChamps) and Instagram (@internationalrafting) or join in the conversation #raftersareawesome

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Raft racing takes place over several days and at the continental and world level is held in four disciplines:

* Sprint: fastest from top to bottom
* Head-to-Head: teams battle it out 1:1 over the sprint course but this time with buoy navigation mandatory - full contact is permitted in a knockout competition where the winner is decided not necessarily on who is fastest but who plays their tactics the best. If you’ve seen BoaterX - increase the contact and obstacles and you’ll understand Head-to-Head
* Slalom: very similar to canoe/kayak slalom with the best of two runs counting but more complex with a larger craft and more heads to pass through the gates in the correct direction
* Downriver (Endurance): a gruelling test of working together as a team - race rules dictate this should be more than 20 minutes but less than 60 minutes

**EVENT SNAPSHOT:**Event Title: IRF 2019 World Rafting Championships Powered by Experience Co.Dates: 13 – 20 May 2019Free event to attend.Who will compete at the event: The World’s best White-Water Raft Racing athletesThe event is an Official International Rafting Federation sanctioned event.Website: [www.wrc2019.com](http://www.wrc2019.com)
IRF Facebook: [@IRFWorldRaftingChamps](http://www.facebook.com/IRFWorldRaftingChamps)
IRF Instagram: [@internationalrafting](http://www.instagram.com/internationalrafting)

About the International Rafting Federation: The International Rafting Federation is recognised as the world governing body for Rafting Sport.  Every year, the IRF organises the World Rafting Championship (WRC), a top tier competition between the most recognised and celebrated rafting athletes in the world who gather together to represent their respective nations.  The IRF also organises or oversees a tremendous variety of continental, regional and local rafting competitions and championships.  IRF competitions closely follow the Olympic model and IOC recommendations, while remaining true to the traditions and history of our sport that has made it so popular.

The IRF is about bringing the world of rafting together so we can all benefit from our interaction.  This interaction may involve anything from competing at the world championship level to being part of a local grassroots event in your home town.  Or it could be that once-in-a-lifetime experience of going on a commercial raft trip locally or around the world, whether it be for 1 hour or 16 days.

The IRF is in the forefront of raft safety worldwide.  Recognised as the world body which oversees the certification and training of professional river rafting guides, the IRF works closely with national organisations and government bodies by offering the only rafting guide certification program accepted worldwide.

The IRF is deeply committed to protecting the rivers of our planet from senseless destruction, and to preserve them for future generations. We recognize that mankind are not the owners of our planet, but instead are its caretakers and stewards.

**Social media:**

International Rafting Federation: @internationalrafting (Facebook, Instagram)

IRF World Rafting Championship: @IRFWorldRaftingChamps (Facebook)

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