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Canmore duo excited to paddle at world juniors

Teens Bryce Shaw, Marissa Dederer looking forward to event in Europe

For two teens from Canmore, this was not any ordinary day kayaking the Kananaskis River. ... On June 1, everything was on the line. Seventeen-year-old Bryce Shaw and 15-year-old Marissa Dederer placed well in the junior national whitewater slalom team trials. With their performances, the teenagers have earned spots on the junior national team and will compete at the world junior championships in Roudnice, Czech Republic, just outside Prague, on July 26 and 27.



Bryce Shaw's dynamic style can lead to erratic paddling, which is something he has been focusing on. "It's improved quite a bit," says Shaw, 17.

"I'm so excited," says Dederer. "I love this sport and I'm really happy I get this chance."

Dederer finished second overall, earning the second spot on the team. The competition featured three races. Dederer had solid first and second races, but put everything she had into the third race — the one that really mattered.

"It was still open to anybody to pass for a win," says the pair's high-performance coach Mike Holroyd. "She was in a good position after (the first two races); she felt pretty confident. In the third race, she laid down probably the best run she's had all year."

Shaw's berth on the team came down to the third race as well, but he was not expected to finish third and earn a team spot.

"He started off a little bit shaky," says Holroyd, who started coaching in the high-performance program this year.

He is the first high-performance coach the Alberta Slalom Canoe Kayak program has had.

"It was kind of tense," says Shaw. "I had quite a bit of pressure coming into the third race. Luckily, I did really well on that one."

The team consists of nine athletes — Dederer and Shaw are the only Albertans on the team, while five members are from Ontario and two Quebecers round out the roster.

There are different kinds of kayaking — the trials and world championships are slalom, while Shaw's background consists mainly of freestyle.

"He has a much more dynamic style," says Holroyd. "It can lead to problems . . . but he can be quick and that's the reason why he's done so well."

Shaw agrees his dynamic style can lead to erratic paddling, which is something he has been focusing on.

"It's improved quite a bit. I just need to be able to be more precise out of the gate to push my way through the course."

Both Canmore residents, who have been on the river since they were 13 years old, are overseas training for their competition.

The kayakers travel throughout B.C., and south to a training facility in North Carolina to practise and compete throughout the year. The Kananaskis River is their home turf, but Holroyd desires a facility in Calgary like the one in North Carolina.

Dederer competed in Africa in January, but has never been to Europe.

"It's the best feeling," she says. "I've never been to a competition of that scale yet, so I'm really just hoping to be in the top half."

