

# How to Approach Hosting Races as a Novice Organizer?

ICF Wildwater Canoeing Coaching Seminars

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# PERSONAL BACKGROUND

- ▶ Sara Seprenyi – Hungarian Canoe Federation
- ▶ Slalom Development Coordinator, Head Coach
- ▶ EX flatwater, current slalom and downriver athlete
- ▶ Started to built the basics in Hungary in 2024
- ▶ Currently: Kids Course, 82 athletes, 7 judges, education programs



# THE AIM

- ▶ Organizing a Wildwater Canoeing World Cup
- ▶ 5-6. June 2026 Dunaremete, Hungary
- ▶ 1st Time ever Wildwater Race in the Country
- ▶ Share experience and ideas as a first-time organizer
- ▶ Highlight challenges and solutions
- ▶ Provide guidance for future organizers



# WHY HOST A WORLD CUP?

- ▶ Develop the sport nationally, good excuse
- ▶ Between slalom and flatwater, good endurance training for kids, Slovenian traditional training programs
- ▶ Create national visibility for the sport and our course
- ▶ Build long-term infrastructure
- ▶ Preserve downriver racing even if the course not ideal
- ▶ Organise future big international events also in slalom
- ▶ Need to sell the sport, entertainment
- ▶ Motivate athletes to join to w
- ▶ Easy water, development athletes



- Dunaremete is a small village North Hungary close to Cunovo
- **ABOUT THE PLACE**
- in National Park
- First ever slalom course 2025 May, international race in September

- Hungary's wildest river
- WW1-2, but construction in 2026 December

- Controlled by dam

- Remois location

- Classic 4.66 km, sprint 200m



# CHALLANGES AND RISKS

- ▶ Lack of experience to organise a ww world cup
- ▶ Late application – short time
- ▶ Hungarian attitude: „not possible”
- ▶ Mainly: Change people way to thinking
- ▶ Lack of judges, equipment, stuffs, safety
- ▶ Remote location
- ▶ National park – permissions
- ▶ Funding – non known sport, none Olympic discipline
- ▶ Not many expert organiser
- ▶ Enough participants



# SOLUTIONS

- ▶ „Never organised a downriver race”
- ▶ Use experience of FW international events and our slalom races
- ▶ Use example of previous organisers
- ▶ Ask for opinion of experts – Amazing WW family
- ▶ Organise a prerace - use it as selection
- ▶ Something will always be missing – get prepared
- ▶ „Late application” – settle everything ASAP
- ▶ Started preparations already at the Worlds



# SOLUTIONS

- ▶ Hungarian attitude: „not possible”, „Ww not possible in Hungary”
- ▶ Show example- it is possible!! - If you can't solve it find somebody who can!
- ▶ „Funding”
- ▶ Introduce the sport to the public - media
- ▶ Invite sport leaders, companies ect. To races, trying rafting!
- ▶ Finding sponsors
- ▶ Using the FW sponsors, seek for leaders who paddled before. Local companies who can benefit from visibility
- ▶ Connections are really important!
- ▶ Also apply for government support or EU funding
- ▶ None Olympic discipline – have to connect with slalom
- ▶ 2 version: simple/advanced



# SOLUTIONS

- ▶ „Lac of judges, equipment, stuffs, safety”
- ▶ Ask ww family for help
- ▶ Borrow equipment
- ▶ Invite judges from Slovenia on prerace
- ▶ Invite home the Hungarian rescue guides from Slovenia and Austria/ Croatian rescue team
- ▶ Stuff: Volunteers, Parents, Kids
- ▶ Invite experts before the race
- ▶ Something always missing
- ▶ Plan B



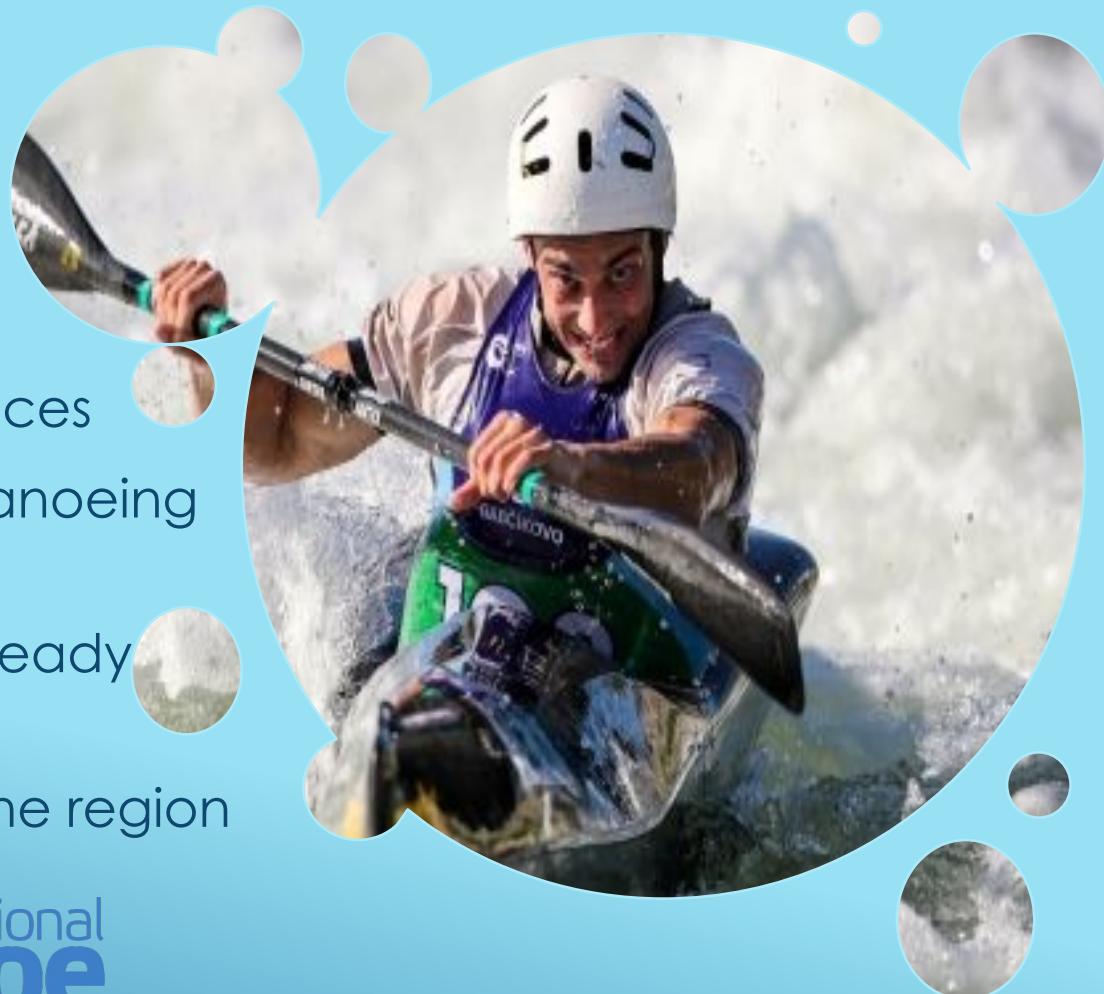
# SOLUTIONS

- ▶ „Remote location”
- ▶ First year need to bring everything there
- ▶ Tents, containers, aggregator etc.
- ▶ Not cost effective but pointing out the needs
- ▶ In case of success, we can apply for infrastructure
- ▶ „National park – permissions”
- ▶ Prepare it in time (min. 30 days prior)
- ▶ Connections in high places – pressure
- ▶ After party in the town
- ▶ Developement program for participation



# FUTURE VISION

- ▶ In case of success
- ▶ Regular international races
- ▶ Build a basic for WW Canoeing in Hungary
- ▶ Reconstructed course ready 2027
- ▶ Development hub for the region



# KEY NOTES

- ▶ Start small/ simple
- ▶ Have a Plan B
- ▶ Build step by step
- ▶ Respect timelines
- ▶ Learn from every event
- ▶ WW family is amazing – GET HELP!
- ▶ You don't need to be perfect to start
- ▶ You must be realistic, transparent, and committed





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

