

Great Britain's winning day in World Rowing Fantasy Cup II

Top rowers from around the world lined up this weekend for the second edition of the World Rowing Fantasy Cup and voting over Friday and Saturday was convincing and strong.



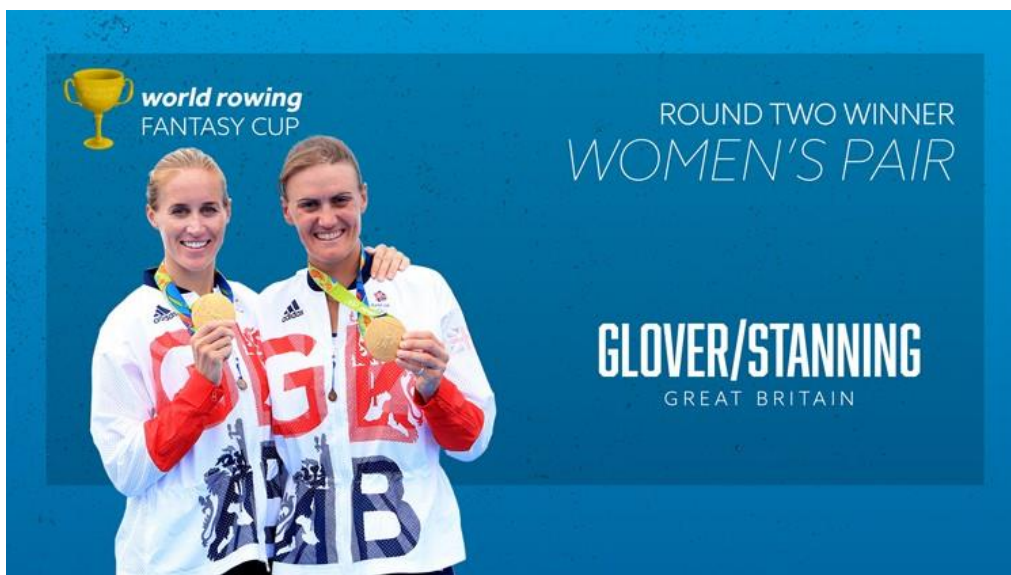
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The winners of the first round took on new challengers and while some maintained their winning streak, others have been knocked out. Here's a recap of how the races panned out.

The racing started with the **women's pair** and it was a close one. Round one winners Grace Prendergast and Kerri Gowler of New Zealand went up against the British force of Helen Glover and Heather Stanning. The two crews took off from the start line going bowball-to-bowball. They clocked exactly the same split at the 500m mark, both recording an identical number of votes. Going through the middle of the race, fans watched to see if the Kiwis would pull off their typically-fast third 500m. But even as they tried to inch ahead, the British went with them. Into the final sprint Glover and Stanning took a quick look around and picked up the pace. With over 50 per cent of the votes, the British took the win in the second round.

Winner: Great Britain (2533 votes)

Runner-up: New Zealand (2193 votes)

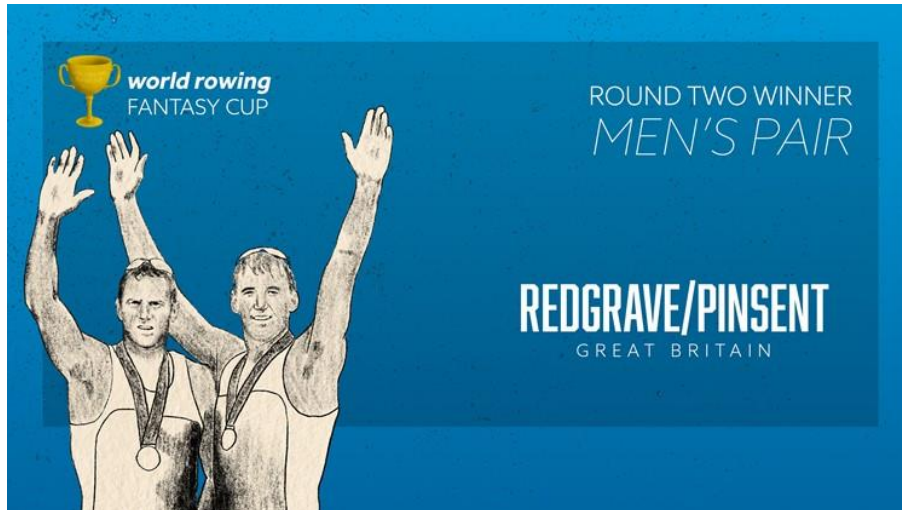


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Next up was the **men's pair** and the closeness of voting made it a race to the end. The winners of round one, the Sinkovic brothers, took the early lead ahead of Matthew Pinsent and Steve Redgrave from Great Britain. The Sinkovics are known for their ability to jump off the start line and their recently-found stability in the men's pair has made their start even faster. But the experience in the British crew was not about to give in. Fighting their way back through the middle of the race, Pinsent and Redgrave saw the power in the Sinkovic boat start to fade. Into the final sprint, the British new they had it – but not by a large margin.

Winner: Great Britain (2945 votes)

Runner-up: Croatia (2614 votes)



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Friday's racing continued with the eights. First up was the **women's eight** when the winners from round one, the 2004 Romanian women's eight, took on the new challenger, the 2013 United States women's eight. The Romanian crew dominated in the medal count with a whopping 35 Olympic medals between them. They got out to a blistering start ahead of the 2013 USA boat, who hold the World Best Time in the category. But the Romanians were not to be stopped, they saw the opportunity and took it, maintaining their dominating performance through the finish line. Romania had survived the US onslaught and they move on to round three.

Winner: Romania (3276 votes)

Runner-up: United States (1715 votes)



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The **men's eight** race saw the round one winner, the 2016 British men's eight, go up against a blast from the past, the 2008 Canadian men's eight. The British grabbed the early lead and as they crossed the 500m mark, the Canadian effort fell behind. The Canadian crew was known to race from the front and did not like being behind. As the crew started to look about, the British used the advantage of racing out front and managed to control the race straight through the finish.

Winner: Great Britain (3768 votes)

Runner-up: Canada (1495 votes)



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The second day of racing brought with it much anticipation as the singles, lightweight doubles and para mixed doubles took to the start. First up was the **women's single sculls**. Ekaterina Karsten (BLR) won the first round in style and was set to go up against Rumyana Neykova from Bulgaria for this round two. Right from the beginning there was no question about it. Karsten shot out of the start line and into the lead. After controlling the race, she was able to relax, rowing long, smooth strokes and taking the win to propel her into the final round. Karsten's was the most resounding win of the weekend.

Winner: Ekaterina Karsten (BLR) – (4244 votes)

Runner-up: Rumuyana Neykova (BUL) – (927 votes)



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As the water settled down slightly, the **men's single** scullers made their way to the start line. Two rowing greats were about to face off. Mahe Drysdale of New Zealand came out of round one with guns blazing to line up against Olaf Tufte of Norway. Drysdale got the better of the start and pressed out into an early lead. Drysdale, rating slightly lower than Tufte, with his long, powerful strokes found his rhythm in the middle of the race. In typical, Kiwi fashion, he picked it up through the third quarter. Tufte picked up the rate again into the final sprint, but it just wasn't enough to catch the New Zealander.

Winner: Mahe Drysdale (NZL) – (4575 votes)

Runner-up: Olaf Tufte (NOR) – (2399 votes)



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Then the lightweights took to the water with the **women's lightweight double** up first. It was another race for the Kiwi fans as Jackie Kiddle and Zoe McBride took on the Dutch duo of Marit van Eupen and Kirsten van der Kolk. Similar to their fellow teammates, Kiddle and McBride took the early lead, looking convincing off the start. As van Eupen and van der Kolk found their rhythm through the middle of the race, they inched back. But the Kiwi's early lead helped them fight off any pressure and they crossed in a convincing style through the finish line.

Winner: New Zealand (3910 votes)

Runner-up: Netherlands (1738 votes)



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The **men's lightweight double sculls** was also called early on as the unstoppable Danish double of Mads Rasmussen and Rasmus Quist took on the British duo of Zac Purchase and Mark Hunter. The Danish had an impressive performance in round one when they outpaced the Irish double and they were on fire again. They leapt out of the starting blocks to an early lead and with every stroke they pushed farther. They did not back off as they rowed their own race through the finish line.

Winner: Denmark (3801 votes)

Runner-up: Great Britain (1958 votes)



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In the last race of the day, the para-rowers took to the water in the **para PR2 mixed double sculls**. The winners from round one, Perle Bouge and Stephane Tardieu went up against the 2019 World Champions from Great Britain, Laurence Whiteley and Lauren Rowles. The British took a very small early lead, but the French did not let them get away too fast. Going through the middle of the race, the two crews went stroke for stroke, with the British maintaining a small lead. Into the final 500m the British picked up the pace and started to push away. With every stroke they gained confidence to take the win ahead of France.

Winner: Great Britain (2954 votes)

Runner-up: France (1897 votes)



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