ESSOX II – CS Composites

By Emmanuel Beauchard (Edited by Chris Norbury)

I got an Essox II after Valtellina World Championships; I changed designs in order to prepare in the best way for the 2015 Wildwater Sprint Championships in Vienna. After the 2014 World Championships, which was held on a very challenging course I felt I needed an "easier" boat in the sprint event with the goal of having better boat control at top speed in hard water. I haven't paddled the Essox II for as long as I have paddled the Tonga, but the feeling in the boat is very different. The Essox II is very stable and this is enjoyable when you paddle big white water. You don't have to wonder about stability: it's all about trying to go faster without worrying. When you train (or race) at top speed in white water this is extremely valuable. The boat falls less on its side (i.e. the primary stability is very good and the boat stays upright without leaning onto the wings, which can affect your direction) and you can focus on keeping the boat at top speed in the direction you are aiming for. The boat will also allow you to make maneuvers at the last minute because of its stability.

In shallow water, this boat seems to stuck to the bottom of the river (this is a very personal view). Therefore using it to race on rivers like the Nantahala doesn't seem like the best choice in the shallow classic, but it would still be a good for the sprint, even on the Nanatahala. Nevertheless paddling with the boat on flat water (as long as it is deep enough) is still nice and it appears to be as fast as a Tonga in time trials. The construction of the boat by CS Canoe seems better than the current batch of ZBS boats. However, the boats are a bit heavier, just over 10kg. I think it is better to have a better constructed boat that is a bit heavier than a boat that will not last for the whole season. The classic Essox II is made for tall (pretty heavy) people. If you are lightweight you can ask for a special "S-cut Essox II", same shape but with less volume.