



INTERNATIONAL CANOE FEDERATION

## Media Service

**International Canoe Federation Media Release**

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### **Slalom C1 Heats report and photographs**

Beijing, China - Slovakian C1 legend Michal Martikan signalled his intentions of ending his back-to-back Olympic silver medal streak with two unmatched runs in the heats of the Olympic slalom C1 competition at the impressive man-made wild water course at Shunyi, north East of Beijing.

Martikan, who has had to play second fiddle to France's Tony Estanguet at the last two Olympics since he won gold in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, was in a class of his own as the sixteen athletes raced for the twelve berths in the semi-finals on Tuesday.

Martikan's two clear runs were the fastest of the day, but importantly the stocky, slight Slovakian showed that he has the combination of strength and subtle technique to master the demands posed by the powerful and technical 280 metre long channel.

His speed and glide in the upstream gates set him apart from the rest of the field, as he took the first step towards a second Olympic gold with a brace of fast runs.

Martikan however downplayed his times. "The times are not important," he said. "The real race starts tomorrow, with the semi-finals and the final."

The fastest time of the day belonged to Great Britain's David Florence, who bounced back from posting the seventh fastest first run, with a blistering 82 second second run that has set a new benchmark for this course.

Germany's Jan Benzien also made his point by being the only other paddler to cover the course in less than 85 seconds with an impressive clear second run.

Czech Republic ace Stanislav Jezek also put his hand up with two solid and fast runs that kept him at the top of the leaderboard until he was trumped by the speed of Florence and Benzien.

Defending Olympic champion Tony Estanguet was nervy and hesitant on the first day of competition on what was widely regarded as a fair and manageable course set on the powerful 17 cumecs of water. After a jittery first run he posted a far more convincing second to finish the heats in sixth place.

Martikan made his intentions clear from the outset with a clinical and aggressive first run, with his trademark fast glide and speed on the upstream gates allowing him to post the fastest first run time.

With Spaniard Ander Elosegui and Russian Alexander Lipatov also posting fast clear rounds, Australian Robin Bell found himself sixth, after a sluggish top section of the course.

Further down the field Japans Takuya Haneda, Poland's Krzysztof Bieryt and Croat Emir Mujcinvic all picked up two second penalties for touching gates, sending them into the bottom four on the leaderboard, where they faced the risk of not qualifying for the semi-finals.

They were joined there by South African "Master" Cele, who was a bundle of nerves, and had to twice Eskimo roll after capsizing on the top half of the course. He then accumulated a fifty second penalty for missed a gate in the lower section, effectively sealing the end of his dreams of reaching the semi-finals.

Bieryt bailed himself out of trouble with a fast second run which saw him depose Canadian into thirteenth place, and out of the semi-finals

The C1 slalom event will conclude on Tuesday when semi-finals will decide the eight finalists, who will then contest the Olympic medals.


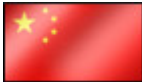








#### **SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

Combined times of first and second runs

1. Michal Martikan SLK 170.15

- 2.Jan Benzien GER 170.50
- 3.David Florence GBR 171.63
- 4.Stanislav Jezek CZE 172.09
- 5.Ander Elosegui ESP 172.47
- 6.Tony Estanguet FRA 176.08
- 7.Robin Bell AUS 176.45
- 8.Christos Tsakmakis GRE 177.54
- 9.Alexander Lipatov RUS 178.16
- 10.Benn Fraker USA 179.44
- 11.Liming Feng CHN 181.99
- 12.Krzystof Bieryt POL 183.29
- 13.James Cartwright CAN 184.63 DNQ
- 14.Takuya Haneda JPN 186.32 DNQ
- 15.Emir Mujcinovic CRO 189.31 DNQ
- 16.Siboniso Cele RSA 262.93 DNQ

ENDS

<b>Photo</b>	<b>Caption</b>	<b>Photographer</b>	<b>Click to download the hi-res pic</b>
	Siboniso Cele RSA. 	Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Liming Feng CHN. 	Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Emir Mujcinovic CRO. 	Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Alexander Lipatov RUS. 	Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	James Cartwright CAN. 	Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Takuya Haneda JPN. 	Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Ander Elosegui ESP. 	Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>

	Benn Fraser USA.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Krzystof Bieryt POL.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Christos Tsamakis GRE.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Jen Benzien GER.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Stanislav Jezek CZE.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	David Florence GBR.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Robin Bell AUS.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Tony Estanguet FRA.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>
	Michal Martikan SVK.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	<a href="#">HERE</a>

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