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Slalom K1 Heats report and photographs

Beijing, China - Slovenian Peter Kauzer secured the top seeding for Tuesday's semi-finals with back-to-back fastest times in the heats stage of the Mens K1 slalom competition at the Shunyi Olympic Canoeing park. The 24 year old from Hrastnik set himself up as the man to beat in his first Olympic games, racing against a field loaded with seasoned Olympic stars.

Proving that his recent victory in a World Cup in Tacen was no fluke, Kauzer upstaged Germany's Alexander Grimm, whose first run was marred by a two second penalty for a touch on gate 16, the pumped up Italian Daniele Molmenti and the dogged Pole Dariusz Popiela to top the list of paddlers vying for berths in the semi finals on Tuesday.

Kauzer topped the standings despite posting the fifth fastest time on his second run, but hinted that this was part of a broader strategy. "Tuesday is going to be a very hard day. That's why I took it easy on the second run. Even though I made no mistakes today I think that I can do better tomorrow," he added.

Another of the stars was Togo's Benjamin Boukpeti. A sluggish first run that included a two-second penalty incurred at the troublesome upstream gate 20 proved to be the ideal inspiration for him, as he blitzed the course on his second run in the fastest time of the day to finish in eighth place, and in the process became the first African slalom paddler to qualify for the semi-finals of an Olympic slalom competition.

"I just want to give of my best," said Boukpeti. "If the semi-final is anything like my second run today then anything is possible!"

America's Scott Parsons produced the days hard-luck-story. After finishing the first round in third place, he was on track for an even better second run when he misjudged the tricky upstream gate 20, and the judges ruled that his head had not passed between the poles, resulting in a fifty second penalty that saw him tumble to sixteenth position, and out of the competition.

Swiss paddler Kurt Michael saw his Olympic dreams sink in the churning water of the Shunyi course when he undid a solid first run that had left him in fourth place with a messy second run that included two two-second penalties for touching gates, and saw him slide down the leaderboard to nineteenth. "I blew it completely," he said afterwards. "I am really disappointed."

Joining him and Michael amongst the casualties on day one were Chile's Pablo McCandless, Japan's Kazuki Yazawa, Atanas Nokowski, and, to the disappointment of the cheering Chinese fans, local K1 paddler Fuxue Ding.

The semi-finals and finals will take place on Tuesday.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

OLYMPIC MEN'S K1 HEATS

Combined times of first and second runs

1. Peter Kauzer SLO 166.49
2. Fabien Lafevre FRA 168.06
3. Danile Molmenti ITA 168.59
4. Alexander Grimm GER 169.26
5. Dariuzs Popelia POL 171.02
6. Helmut Oblinger AUT 171.75
7. Vavrinec Hradilek CZE 172.02
8. Benjamin Boukpeti TOG 172.26
9. Campbell walsh GBR 172.44
10. Warwick Draper AUS 172.58
11. Peter Cibak SLK 172.95
12. Guillermo Diez Canedo ESP 173.02
13. David Ford CAN 174.84
14. Robert Bouten NED 175.16
15. Eoin Rheinisch IRL 176.33
16. Pablo McCandless CHI 176.64 DNQ
17. Kurt Michael SUI 178.56 DNQ
18. Kazuki Yazawa JPN 189.87 DNQ
19. Atanas Nokolowski FYRM 181.91 DNQ
20. Scott Parson 220.83 DNQ
21. Fuxue Ding CHN 228.39 DNQ

ENDS

<i>Photo</i>	<i>Caption</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Click to download the hi-res pic</i>
	Fuxue Ding CHN. 	Pic: Bálint Vékássy / ICF	HERE
	Kazuki Yazawa JPN. 	Pic: Bálint Vékássy / ICF	HERE
	Atanas Nikolovski MKD. 	Pic: Bálint Vékássy / ICF	HERE
	Pablo McCandless CHI. 	Pic: Bálint Vékássy / ICF	HERE
	Benjamin Boukpeti TOG 	Pic: Bálint Vékássy / ICF	HERE

	Guillermo Diez Canedo ESP.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE
	Robert Bouten NED.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	HERE
	Vavrinec Hradilek CZE.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE
	Warwick Draper AUS.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	HERE
	Dariusz Popiela POL.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE
	Peter Cibak SVK.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	HERE
	David Ford CAN.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE
	Helmut Oblinger GER.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	HERE
	Eoin Rheinisch IRL.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE
	Kurt Michael SUI.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy / ICF	HERE

	Campbell Walsh GBR.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE
	Scott Parsons USA.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE
	Daniele Molmenti ITA.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE
	Fabien Lefevre FRA.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE
	Alexander Grimm GER.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE
	Peter Kauser SLO.		Pic:Bálint Vékássy /ICF	HERE

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