

French take gold and bronze in single kayak

ATHENS, Greece (AP) Frenchman Benoit Peschier, who entered the Olympics ranked 12th in the world in single kayak slalom, put together a pair of clean, fast runs Friday to win the gold medal.

Peschier was second behind Britain's Campbell Walsh by .25 seconds after the semifinal run, then beat Walsh by 2.46 on the final run through the whitewater course. Walsh had a clean run but got hung up in several spots.

Defending world champion Fabien Lefevre of France took bronze, 3.03 seconds behind Pecheir on combined time.

Foaming whitewater falsely tripped the start timer before Walsh had actually crossed the starting line, causing the scoreboard to initially show he finished out of the medals to the disappointment of a sizable, flag-waving British crowd. But Walsh ended up on the podium after all.

Scott Parsons was the only American to make the 10-boat finals after a ninth-best time in the semifinals. He finished sixth.

Earlier, U.S. captain Brett Heyl, who had looked the best of the Americans in the preliminary with a fifth-fastest time, fell out of contention with a 15th place in his semifinal run.

Switzerland's Michael Kurt, who had the best combined preliminary time, hit two gates for four seconds in penalties and fell all the way to last out of the 20 semifinalists.