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France and Slovakia earn golds in canoe/kayak

Athens, Greece (Sports Network) - Benoit Peschier of France won gold in the men's single kayak on Friday, while the Slovakian team of Pavol and Peter Hochschorner took gold in the men's double canoe at the Helliniko Slalom Center.

Peschier, who ranked second after Friday morning's semifinal, posted a final run of 94.03 seconds to overtake Brit Campbell Walsh for the gold medal. Peschier's total time was 187.96 seconds, just over two seconds faster than Walsh.

"I can hardly realize that I won the gold medal," Peschier said. "It's amazing."

Walsh settled for the silver medals after the final run of 96.49 seconds, nearly three seconds slower than his semifinal time.

"I was prepared for the gold medal," Walsh said. "I made some mistakes and I lost it. The silver medal is also a big success."

Peschier's countryman Fabien Lefevre won the bronze medal with a total time of 190.99 seconds. Lefevre was in sixth place after the semifinals, but ripped off a run of 93.86 in the final to catapult himself up the standings.

"I'm disappointed I didn't get the silver," Lefevre said, "but I'm satisfied with my performance and with my timing."

American Scott Parsons, ninth after the semifinals, posted a final time of 97.94 to finish in sixth place. Teammate Brett Heyl, who qualified for the semifinals, didn't make the final.

The Hochschorners were in gold medal position throughout the day, finishing in first place after the semifinal and then coming in second for the final and an overall time of 207.16.

"We are both lucky and good," Peter Hochschorner said. "The course was wonderful and the weather was perfect."

The German duo of Stefan Henze and Marcus Becker were fourth after the semifinal, but posted a time of 104.66 in the final to move into position for the silver. Their total time was 210.98, nearly four seconds slower than the Slovaks.

"When we realized that we were silver medalists, we couldn't believe it," Becker said. "It's a great success in a very hard course."

Jaroslav Volf and Ondrej Stepanek of the Czech Republic won the bronze in 212.86 seconds. The veteran American C2 team of Matt Taylor and Joseph Jacobi didn't make the final after qualifying for the semifinal.

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