



### **Development program nurtures slalom kayak athletes in emerging countries**

La Seu d'Urgell, Spain – Wherever there are mountains, there's rushing whitewater rivers and wherever there's whitewater there's an opportunity to develop whitewater paddlers. It is with those basic facts in mind that the International Canoe Federation has created a development program aimed at increasing interest and proficiency in whitewater slalom kayaking.

To that end, as a prelude to this week's ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships, the organization invested in developing newly identified athletes in the sport by hosting a formal two-week training camp.

The ICF Technical Director, Csaba Szanto, and Jean Michel Prono, ICF Slalom Committee Chairman managed the selection process for the camp. The ICF contacted national sports federations and asked them to identify their best slalom prospects. Athletes were then sent a questionnaire designed by the ICF to help determine those most qualified and motivated to participate in the two--week camp.

Once they arrived in Seu, coaches worked with the young athletes on basic skills and practiced here on the slalom course built expressly for the 1992 Olympics.

"The camp was great, especially the coaching and it was a really good opportunity to develop alongside other athletes from around the world" said Chu-Han Chang a K1 woman competitor from Chinese Taipei.

Jean Michel Prono, ICF slalom technical committee chair, said "more than a few of the young athletes showed great improvement and longterm prospects and this is encouraging at the start of an Olympic cycle".

Five-time World Slalom Champion Richard Fox agreed with Prono that the development program at these championships was a great success. Fox is Second Vice President of the ICF and charged with oversight of the organization's whitewater disciplines.

"The success of this program is due to the more targeted approach adopted by the ICF, the quality of our coaches at the camp and the close collaboration between the ICF and the local organizing committee," he said.

Following is a list of participants in the training camp. Maria Luz Cassin ARG, Sergey Cherkassov KAZ, Andrei Nikolaev, UZB, Prossy Derra UGA, Susmita Suniwar NEP, Celia Jodar MAR, Mohammed Asinullan Kamar MAS, Mohammed Akmal Aboullah



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MAS, Chu-Han Chang TPE, Anya Sappermpool THA, Andres Straub HUN, Attila Kmab HUN, Maria Roquet AND, Matiss Mezals LAT, Ella Nicholas COC, Arsen Sargsyan ARM, Komlangen Sassou TOG, Sevinch Ismalava BLR, Victoriya Us UKR, Teijo Tarkka FIN, Jonathan Akinyemi NGR, Anil Acar TRK, Oktay Alcann TRK, Claudia Gallo CRC, Walter Centeno CRC, Bogden Bukara SRB, Savic Danko BIH, Erika (last name unavailable) LTU.

For further information about the athletes and the development program contact ICF Technical Director, Csaba Szanto, [Csaba.Szanto@canoeicf.com](mailto:Csaba.Szanto@canoeicf.com). For more information about the ICF, visit <http://www.canoeicf.com>. For more information about this week's Canoe Slalom World Championships visit <http://worldseu09.parcolimpic.com>