



For Immediate Release

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Inje, South Korea: The move between gates number 10 and 11 on Korea's Naerinchon River proved the hardest for the 30 countries at day two's slalom event of World Rafting Championships, with four flips and three wraps wreaking havoc on competitors' runs. Nevertheless, it was Germany overcoming its bad luck from previous World Championships to command the top spot for the men, finishing nearly a second ahead of the slalom-oriented Czechs. "We were too nervous on our first run, with three touches," says German Team Captain Max Remmele. "So we relaxed on the second run, and had a better line. But we're all K-1 and C-1 slalom paddlers, and use powerful, long strokes, so slalom is our strong event."

For the women, it was the Czech Republic besting New Zealand, marking a dynamic showdown for tomorrow's downriver race. The Czechs now have a first- and third-place showing in slalom and sprint, respectively, for the overall lead with 537 points, with the Kiwis close on their heels with two second-place finishes for 528 points. "It comes down to the downriver event tomorrow," says New Zealand Captain Nikki Kelly, whose team held the overall title for four years before the Czechs took it away in Ecuador in 2005. "Still, slalom is their strong point, so we're psyched to have beaten them in this event." For the men, the overall results are even closer. Germany and Brazil are tied with 507 points, followed by Japan with 462 and Slovakia with 453.

The course was more technical than other World Championship slalom events, demanding both precision and strength. "It was a deceiving course," says Race Director Mark Joffe. "It wasn't so much the gates that were tough, but what was between them. While a lot of teams had clean runs, which is different from many other World Championships, you had to have good control in order to go fast."

The event celebrates the 10th anniversary of the International Rafting Federation, and marks the first time Asia has hosted the championships. On hand with 20 cameras, ESPN Asia is filming it for distribution worldwide, with South Korea also in the running to host the 2014 Winter Olympics.