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NEWS SPOTLIGHT SPORTS BUSINESS COLUMNISTS **EDITORIAL** 

Fri, November 14, 2003

## Poll says Martin unstoppable

### By BILL RODGERS, OTTAWA BUREAU CHIEF

TORONTO -- The Paul Martin-led Liberals will be [an error occurred virtually unstoppable in an election expected early while processing next year, according to a new SES/Sun Media poll. this directive] A telephone survey of 1,000 Canadians shows if sentiment holds, the Martin juggernaut would steamroll any of the current and potential opposition leaders.

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He beats Stephen Harper, Peter MacKay or New Brunswick Premier Bernard Lord hands down if they led a united conservative party into an election held today.

Martin takes a whopping 55% of decided voters against Harper, who proved to be the best of the conservative crop. Harper would win 25% support, ahead of the NDP's Jack Layton at 12% and separatist Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe at 8%.

A MacKay or Lord-led opposition party would be trounced by the prime minister-in-waiting who would increase his support to 58%. Lord takes 21%; MacKay pulls 20%.

The news is even worse for the two conservative leaders when Canadians are asked who the best person would be to lead the new conservative party. Only 11% think MacKay is the best person. Harper doesn't score much better with 14%. The poll showed 37% don't believe either leader is up to the job, and 38% said they were unsure.

The poll offered one consolation to conservatives. When committed Liberals were asked if they would consider voting for a united conservative party, 40% said yes compared to 45% who said no. About 14% were unsure.



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Martin supporter Roger Gallaway wasn't surprised by the outcome of the SES/Sun Media poll.

"Our new leader Paul Martin has galvanized public opinion in terms of support for him," said the Sarnia-Lambton MP.

"The right is not perceived to be united."

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