



AHMED TALAAT

AN INTEGRAL ACHIEVEMENT

By Sandra Adams

COURSE DESIGNING IS THE ART OF BUILDING A JUMPING ARENA THAT IS SAFE ENOUGH, ENTERTAINING ENOUGH AND CLEAR ENOUGH TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN COMPETITIONS OF PARTICULAR LEVELS. THIS TASK IS INTEGRAL IN EQUESTRIAN SPORT. A RECENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR EGYPT WAS THE COMPLETION OF THE FEI LEVEL 3 IN INTERNATIONAL COURSE DESIGNING EXAMS BY EGYPT'S OWN, AHMED TALAAT.

How did your love for horse sport start?

When I was five years old, I used to draw a horse every day. At ten, I started to ride in the Police Sports Club with Sherif El Demerdash.

How long have you been a Course Designer?

Been so for 11 years now. I designed my first show in 1999 with Atef El Attar and then I started my real career by assisting Dutch Course Designer Rob Jansen for almost a year. Afterwards I worked with German Course Designer Olaf Petersen Jr. for another year, then also German Course Designer Werner Deeg several times. I truly feel I owe those three men; they have taught me so much.

What requirements are needed to become a course designer?

I believe Course Designing is some kind of art, so you need to have a talent for it. You must know plenty about the sport because simply, you are the one testing the riders. If you yourself don't know the solution for the test and tricks you are using in your course, it would be disastrous. You also need to feel good about the arena space given; it's not just about having one and putting some polls along with wings, then literally implementing what's on paper.

Without "feeling" for the space surrounding you, you will be lost a little. Finally, you need to have good taste for colours since it's a kind of art as I said before.

What kind of challenges do you face as a Course Designer?

The most important thing you always have to put in mind when designing or building any course is the safety of the horses and the riders. Other than that, the challenges come at a minimum. It's a spectator sport so still, I think it is a challenge to try to entertain them somehow; you have to build a course that suits the class in question and quality of riders and horses involved. In addition, you always have to put the prize money into consideration when you are designing.

You were a candidate to Level 3 of the FEI International Course Designing Seminar and you have completed the course. Could you tell us more about the experience as a whole?

Had five tough days! The course was in Vienna and was the first seminar promoting Level 3 International Course Designers after two years. We were 18 Course Designers attending this seminar and I was the only one from the Middle East. We sat for many exams in a short period of time and we also had to design courses in very tough and odd arenas; all in a short time as well. But I can tell you it was a very good challenge for me and I was so happy at the end! Only six out of

18 got promoted as Level 3 Course Designers and I was one of them. Enough said!

Now since you have completed the course, which events would you hope to participate at as a Level 3 Designer?

Oh what a question! Since am Level 3 now I can build shows up to 5 stars, so it would be a dream come true if I had the chance to build any of two shows: the first is Aachen CHIO***** in Germany and the second is Spruce Meadows CSIO***** Calgary. And I would like to build a course during one of the regional games one day; the Pan Arab or the Asian Games.

The sport is still developing in the Middle East and North African region, do you think your completing the course is an achievement and will push others to take on Level 3?

I think we have good Course Designers in our region and they will make it one day. The sport must develop with the whole system, you can not only have good horses and good riders with bad Course Designers and Judges, you need a full package that must develop gradually and all together. And I wish that all Federations help their young and talented Course Designers to improve; without their help it will be so difficult. I thank God I had a lot of support from the Egyptian Federation when I started my career and till this moment, I still get their support. I wish good luck to everybody in this sport and want to thank Horse Times for its great effort. 🇪🇬

▼ Courses at CSIO***** Spruce Meadows

