

IN DEPTH WITH MOHAMED TAHER ZEYADA

By Khaled Assem

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M. TAHER ZEYADA IS AN EXCELLENT YOUNG RIDER WHOM BERNIE TAURIG CALLED "SUPER TALENT", YET THE REAL BACKBONE OF HIS STRENGTH IS HIS MOTHER. SHE IS THE WONDER WOMAN WHO PUTS FORWARD THE STRATEGY, KEEPS THE LOG BOOK OF WORK AND STRIVES TO KEEP HIM IN THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE TO RECEIVE THE HIGH RING CRAFT AT A TOP LEVEL. MOUDA IS COMMITTED, HUMBLE AND BEST OF ALL REALISES THAT PERSISTENCE AND PRACTICE TAKES YOU FURTHER THAN YOUR TALENT.

I remember seeing a tiny little boy on a horse in Sporting club, Alexandria; who was active and feisty and always wanting to jump.

Yes, that's true I have always been hungry to ride and jump. If one day I didn't go to train, I'd gallop and jump by myself on my own two legs.

How did it come about? How did you start riding?

When I was young, my mum and I went to Smouha Club just for normal registration in the club and the equestrian part of the club was right next to the registration office, so when I saw the horses jumping it just came to me that I have to ride. My mum told me that we'll come back but I insisted and that was my first time ever on a horse.

Who were the most influential coaches in your career?

I started with Osama Salah, who taught me how to be strong mentally and physically, never be scared of falling, and always think positively.

Also, definitely the president

of the Egyptian Equestrian Federation, Engineer Hesham Hatab; he is my godfather; he trained me himself every day for almost 10 years.

Recently, I've been training with Karim El Zoghby for 5 years now.

Karim has left a huge imprint on my riding and on my personality. But most importantly he helped me understand how I should think going into the arena; always have the winning spirit, know that I can do it, believe in my horse and believe in myself.

I remember when we had a clinic with Bernie Taurig, he said that you are a talented rider and that if you manage your career well you will be one of the best riders in the world.

Bernie is an amazing coach; he gave us a lot of beneficial tips which helped me throughout my riding. After he left everyone could see that all the riders who were in the clinic became more efficient.

What's your plan for 2017?

I have two good horses jumping in the A1, a 9-year-old and a 10-year-old which is the perfect age.

I will focus next season on the Arab League and I will try to go to the World Cup finals.

And my last goal is my biggest goal, the World Equestrian Games! I always like to put high hopes and I will do my best to get qualified.

Of course to reach my goals and to be able to put enough time and effort, I will have to sacrifice a lot as I am studying pharmacy which is not easy and takes a lot of time.

Also, the EU ban on the importation of horses from Egypt hasn't been lifted yet and I need my personal horses to go, so if the ban is not lifted before the end of the year it will be more difficult. However, my mother always supports me and she always has a back-up plan for me. My mother is very smart and very committed, she sacrifices everything for me, she is my

backbone and she gives me all that she can give and more!

Last season, I went to Qatar for a 4 star show and I had only four faults. I also went to Saudi and Sharjah on borrowed horses and I gained a lot of experience which helped me a lot later on in the Furrusiya FEI Nations' Cup when I rode Karim El Zoghby's horse. It all went very well thanks to Karim's management and going to the Pan Arab Games people lent me their horses because they know Karim and trust him.

With everything that you have learned from Karim and everything that has put you in position of greater awareness and experience, what would you change in our system in Egypt to develop?

When I go to Karim's stables I find the horses always moving! Walkers, paddocks, riding, forest or sand paddocks; and they still have half of the day to rest in their boxes and have their own mind sets. I would change this here, because we only come to the horses when we can ride an hour or so per day and the rest of the day the horses are just in their boxes doing nothing.

Now when I'm here I try to apply what I learned from Karim when I have the availability because the clubs in Egypt are not provided with the required equipment. Right now, I am in Platinum Club, and I have to say that the place is amazing. I have everything that I need for my horses. The stables are very good; the weather is very nice as instead of noisy individual fans for every horse, there is a general suction system for every cluster that supplies very good ventilation; we also have a walker, I can take my horses for a walk in hand as well.

I also learned from Karim commitment. Everyone at his stables have to be awake and ready for work at 8 am every morning, not a minute later.

Going to the top of the game it is all about management and mental fitness and that needs to be emphasised here as well. 🏆