

Karim El Zoghby

Winning The Bronze Medal By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

Karim El Zoghby started training at the age of 6 as his passion for horses had been unfathomable. He would spend his allowance on horse food and carrots! He started training with a few fellow riders who were under the supervision of General Elwy Ghazy, and if he were tardy for 5 minutes, he would literally be sent home.

Born on December 15th 1977, Karim has a friendly and very compatible relationship with his family. His loving father passed away at 39. He was a professor of architecture at Ein Shams University. His mother, Mrs. Amira Kamel, is a consultant in urban planning, and his brother has an MA in economics. But academics were not on Karim's mind, i.e. his mother decided to pull him out from the riding club to focus on his education. He acquired an American diploma from the USA, and then came back to Egypt to join the faculty of tourism. Since graduation, Karim became adamant about becoming a world class rider.

When Karim was 10 years old, he traveled to England to train with Samir Abdelfatah at Harrogate, Sussex, where he bought his first horse, and after intensive training, he competed at the Hickstead/hound rider's competition with his fellow Egyptian team mates and won the 4th prize. Not bad at all for starters. He continued on training with Samir for the next 2 years and entered Harrogate private school. He even had a special schedule at school due to his riding schedule! It was time for Karim to buy his second horse and enjoy his triumph. But his obsession was very undermining for his mother who really wanted to see some good grades at school, and it was that time, at 15 years of age, that Karim returned to Egypt to really start concentrating on his studies.

After his university graduation, Karim moved to Holland, having the support of Amr Eid. He made it his station where he would train to become a professional. As difficult as it was, living alone and caring for all the tasks, he still managed to practice hard and go through the tough world of show jumping. He competed in

several international show jumping events, giving him expertise and a high sense of competitive horsemanship. And now, after being patient, Karim competed in the (140/150cm class) international individual show-jumping Mediterranean games in Almeria, Italy, and won his first ever bronze medal with his horse Lenie. He was competing with two top international riders all of whom are well known in the Equestrian world; the Italian Roberto Arioldi, who

won the gold and, the French Thierry Rozier, who won the silver medal in the tie-break with Karim due to the latter dropping one of the fences which gave him

a penalty of 4 points, in an attempt from him to save time. Rozier then went out with a 3 point penalty for the jump-off time. It was very close, but to Karim, the bronze was still a success and a trophy. The Egyptian Equestrian federation sees a radiantly shining future for the equestrian sport, with the participation of young eager riders such as Karim. Furthermore, being in the process of planning to establish a strong equestrian team that can compete internationally, as well as implementing this plan. This team will include well known names such as Ahmed Besioni, Sameh Hatab, Mohamed Osama El Boraei, Mohamed Sabri, Alaa Maysara and Mohamed Ragab.

After a brief interview, Karim gave us the following answers to our questions:





From left: Thierry Rozier, Roberto Arioldi & Karim El Zoghby



Karim El Zoghby

Did you plan for the Mediterranean games before, or was it a quick decision?

I actually knew 4 weeks before that the games were a sure thing. At that time I put a plan for my mare; work her but keep her fresh by not overdoing it, and to keep her happy because she is one feisty mare!

How do you evaluate your progress 1 year from now?

As long as I keep on performing in my international shows every week, I feel that I would be taking the right direction and I hope to find the right horses on the way. It makes a difference. It's because I'm putting my life on a better road at the moment, this road has become more clairvoyant for me, resulting in my achieving more of my goals.

How long have you been riding this horse, and is she yours?

I bought her in January 2004, she was jumping the M-classes (1.15 / 1.20 cm) in Holland. At that time, she was quite a handful for her owner, but as soon as I laid my eyes on her, I knew she was good. I continued riding her in the 1.20 M-classes until it was summertime and then I slowly worked her up to the 1.50 cm classes in July 2004.

Are you practicing with a well-known trainer at the moment?

No more well-known trainers! I'm doing it my own way now. I've had big names teach me things and now it's time I do it alone. I have a stable of my own and it's working a lot better this way. It's become systematic for me. My stable is based in the middle of Holland and has all the facilities I need; a derby-ring, a big sand arena, nice indoors, a walker, a race track and 20 horses.

Do you think she will be able to perform in the Olympics?

I still have to test her limits, but I think maybe on her good day, it might be possible.

As such, would you keep her?

One never plans on keeping them or selling them, however if someone gives me a good offer, adding of course that at the time I do have a good horse, then it would be possible.

How do you feel about winning for Egypt?

It always feels great to win something for your own country. I won lots of international classes on big international shows, but this is the first time on a championship. I couldn't help but feel disappointed when that radiance of the gold medal flashed at my eyes and I knew it was close, but I hope next time Egypt has a great team and we win a gold medal all together.

What do you wish to achieve in the next 2 to 3 years?

My first dream was to become an international rider making it on his own in Europe, and I got there. I'm planning on performing at the World Championships and the Olympic Games, that's my second dream, to try to achieve results. But since the first goal took me 8 years to pursue, I think it will also take as much time to get to a higher stage due to my working on things on my own. But I believe all is possible. ■