



60 SECONDS WITH DALIA AL ZAHEM

COUNTRY: KUWAIT

DATE OF BIRTH: APRIL 5, 1991

STAR SIGN: ARIES

PROFESSION: INTERIOR DESIGNER

IT'S HARD TO INTRODUCE ONESELF, BUT IF I HAD TO I WOULD SAY I'M SOMEONE WHO IS PASSIONATE ABOUT HORSES, MEDITATION AND HOLISTIC HEALTH. ASIDE FROM THAT, I GRADUATED FROM ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY WITH A DEGREE IN INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND CURRENTLY RUN MY OWN INTERIOR DESIGN FIRM BASED IN KUWAIT. OCCASIONALLY, I OFFER SOME GUIDED YOGA NIDRA CLASSES.



© Thai Equestrian Federation



© Thai Equestrian Federation



© Waleed Al Jaseem



© Waleed Al Jaseem

Describe your typical practice?

Here in Kuwait, we compete on Fridays and Saturdays. If I'm planning on showing my horse the next week I try to focus on flatwork and a few gymnastics sessions.

I usually prefer to jump a few single fences the day before the show or just have him lunged, depending on how he feels. On rest days we go on long hacks and he gets some time out in the paddock.

Where is your favorite place for practice?

Summer training in **Nogent-le-Rotrou**, France.

Tell us one or two things in your training that contributed to your success.

I think consistency in my training program and commitment to a meditation routine are two main things that have contributed to my success in the sport.

What was the best advice you were given?

"Make a plan and and stick with it."

What advice would you give to young athletes?

You should definitely not be afraid to make mistakes as they teach you the most valuable lessons. Pick yourself up after missteps and stay focused.

Also, don't let other people's opinions get in the way of what you set out to accomplish.

What is your best achievement?

Competing at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, Indonesia is definitely my best achievement so far. Although we just missed out on the podium, finishing 4th in the team final, the experience was out of this world. I am also proud to have been part of the Kuwaiti team to win Bronze at the 2019 Asian Championship held in Pattaya, Thailand.

What are the goals that you aspire to achieve?

Some of my goals include: to top the national rankings in Kuwait, participate in as many ranking classes in Europe, as well as competing and winning a title at the Asian Games 2022.

Who has been your greatest support?

I would have to say that it is my aunt **Noaf Bin Essa**, who introduced me to the sport at a very early age. Honestly, she has been my gem for ages and the person that has trained and guided me through it all. I have great love and appreciation for her.

What are your greatest motivations?

Having a connection with horses and being mentally challenged.

Who is your sporting hero?

I do have a few riders that I idolise, my favorites being Jessica Springsteen, Marc Houtzager and Ben Maher.

What is your second favorite sport?

A bunch of them: hiking, figure skating and gymnastics.

What is your favorite genre of movies?

Anything suspenseful.

What kind of music do you enjoy listening to?

Downtempo, and I have a soft spot for college rock.

What is your favorite book and who is your favorite author?

I loved *Healing Spaces* by Esther M. Sternberg. I don't have a favorite author but my reading genres are psychology, neuroscience, health, and mind body connection.

What is your favorite food?

Cheese toasties!

What is the most memorable place you ever visited?

Sedona, Arizona, USA.

What is your strength and what is your weakness?

I would say my strength is a strong commitment and determination to get things done. A weakness would be doubting plans that I set for myself in the show ring.

What is the biggest challenge you have ever faced?

That's deep, but with sports, the biggest challenge is returning to showjumping after a long hiatus.

What is the biggest reward you ever got?

My relationship with my horse **Richebourg** and all that I've learned from him. He's a glorious being.

If you had the power to change something in this world, what would you change?

I'd introduce healing modalities to school curricula.

If there is something about yourself that you would like to change, what would that be?

I would love to be a full-time professional showjumper.

If you weren't who you are today, what would you rather be?

A contemporary dance performer. 🎭