



ALI AL SHARIF

# AMONGST THE TOP

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

COUNTRY: JORDAN

DATE OF BIRTH: NOVEMBER 1 1968

STAR SIGN: SCORPIO

PROFESSION: GM FOR AN INTERNATIONAL RETAIL GROUP &  
INTERNATIONAL SHOW JUMPING JUDGE

ALI AL SHARIF IS THE GENERAL MANAGER OF AN INTERNATIONAL FASHION RETAIL GROUP IN EGYPT. HE'S BEEN WORKING IN THIS INDUSTRY FOR 18 YEARS CURRENTLY MANAGING MORE THAN 90 STORES FOR DIFFERENT INTERNATIONAL FASHION BRANDS WITH MORE THAN 600 COLLEAGUES. AL SHARIF IS AS PASSIONATE ABOUT SHOW JUMPING SPORT AS HE IS ABOUT THE BUSINESS HE MANAGES AND IS ALWAYS PROFESSIONAL AND METICULOUS AT THE EVENTS HE JUDGES. HE IS A FATHER OF THREE CHILDREN: FAISAL 10, QAMAR 7 AND MOHAMMAD 5, AND IS MARRIED TO RANA, WHO CONTINUES TO COPE WITH HIS TRAVEL AND TIME AWAY FROM HOME FOR JUMPING EVENTS.



### Equestrian background:

I started riding in 1992 on a farm and I found out quickly that there is a lot to learn about this sport. I then began to ride at the Arabian Horse Club in Amman, Jordan, mostly flat work inside and outside the club, but didn't pursue this beautiful sport further as I had lower back pain, and my doctor's advice was to quit riding.

### Becoming a show jumping judge:

Becoming more involved in horse sport, I worked at Arabian Horse Club for couple of years as GM, where I managed to initiate and organise international show jumping competitions. This became an addiction, and I enjoyed the whole nine yards of organising such events with all of its complications where riders, national federations, horses, officials and sponsors form the main stakeholders of such an activity. Bringing them together and enjoying a fine show, that became my obsession. Being a judge, knowledgeable of the jumping rules was an added value for a show director and it attracted me eventually to become a show jumping judge. I need to give a large amount of gratitude and respect to the late General Sami Negm El Din, who had the greatest impact in putting me on track to become an international show jumping judge and pursue this.

### Classifications for being an international judge:

I have been judging since 1995 on the national level, and since 1999 on the international one. In 2009 I became an International "Candidate" show jumping judge (Level 2), and just finished a seminar for promotion to Level 3.

### Experiences as a judge:

As you know, the jumping competition is one in which the rider and her/his horse are tested over a course of obstacles to exhibit the horse's will, power, skill and obedience in jumping and the athlete's horsemanship. This is why the jumping rules were



▲ Ali & the late Gen. Sami Negm El Din

established; to control competitions and insure fairness between competitors and welfare of the horse. Having said that, jumping rules don't always have a written answer to all cases in the arena; this is why we're called judges not referees, as sometimes it is about arbitration of a certain case in a certain situation. Therefore, in addition to excellent knowledge of jumping rules, a strong personality, leadership and effective communication skills, vital elements in a good judge, she/he has to also have organisation familiarity and cooperation skills with different stakeholders such as the organising committee, course designer, appeal committee, stewards, media as well as riders and their families or horse owners. So judging in this sport is not only making sure rules are applied, it is also about having a good show, fair competition, content riders, satisfied sponsors and entertained spectators. Judges play a big role accomplishing that, and it is tough yet worthwhile at the same time.

### Fun shows and ones keen to judge at:

I enjoyed every competition I judged and will always be thrilled to step into the arena ground and pat a winning horse and shake hands with its rider.

The experiences I had with every fellow judge is more than rewarding. However, the shows I judge in Jordan are the closest to my heart, maybe because I am a host and part of the organising committee, proudly satisfied with the progress and development of the sport in my country. On the other hand, I would love to be part of the major shows like the Global Champions Tour, the World Equestrian Games and, of course, the Olympics.

### Challenges as a judge:

Not all the riders, organisers and media are always fully aware of jumping rules, so this might be challenging sometimes when a rule is changed or updated. We face objections and criticism until it is clarified and explained. Then comes the challenging post-competition paper work, which is needed also for the proper reporting of organisation and result registration.

### Contributions from the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation:

Indeed, The Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation (RJEF) supported me from the beginning; HRH Princess Alia bint Al Hussein, the President of the RJEF, is always

supporting the development of the sport including the reinforcement of skilled officials as an essential part of the sport sustainability and continuity. Like other colleagues, I had the privilege to be nominated by the RJEF to attend my promotion course to Candidate International judge in 2009 in Alexandria, and was part of the jumping committee in the federation which added a lot to my experience. This year, being away from my country, I've chosen to make my next move on my own, but I will always appreciate the support I am receiving from the RJEF.

### **The development of show jumping in the Middle East:**

Amongst the many brilliant initiatives

by HRH Princess Haya bint Al Hussein, FEI President, World Cup/Arab League has - by far - the greatest impact on this massive development in show jumping in the Arab World, and this is evident from the rankings, medals and winnings that Arab riders are getting in many international competitions for the last years; and for us as well, judges are far more experienced, advanced and competitive unlike previous years where we had to bring all the judges from abroad for our competitions in the region.

### **FEI judging rules:**

There is an update every year for the Jumping Rules; we anticipate this change and updates at the

beginning of each year, as well as any memorandums throughout the year. They come from our practices, cases and feedback that are highlighted and modified, if necessary, which makes the sport always up-to-date and closer to the soul of horsemanship.

### **Likes and dislikes about judging:**

I believe the point I hate the most is the same one I love the most; it is the time when a safe, successful and a brilliant show ends. I love it because it crowns the sum of all efforts throughout many challenging days, that it is also the time I have to say goodbye to friends and colleagues that I enjoyed working with. 🙏

▼ At CSI Amman, 2012

