

PERISCOPE ON DIAA AMR BISHEER

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem



Country: Egypt

Date of Birth: September 25th 1980

▼ Diaa during Seif Al Sham Championships, Syria 2008

Over a cup of coffee and an initial nice chat about David Beckham, the rock band Metallica, and a horse that is dear to his heart, I met with the Egyptian Libran rider Diaa Amr Bisheer who was very outspoken about his positive views regarding the Arab League and the fact that it does represent a step up from national and local shows where competition levels are upped by a larger number of skilled riders. Known to his friends and family as the "Monster", Diaa showed no monstrous behaviour and only gave Horse Times the chance to direct a periscope on his latest achievements.

Education:

I studied Business Administration at the Maadi Modern Academy in Cairo. I mostly rode and tried to keep up with my studies.

Riding:

I love horses. I was one of those kids who'd see a horse in children's books and go to

my mother to tell her that I loved horses and wanted to see one! She took me to Shams Club, Cairo and it all started there when I was 6 years old with my first trainer Gen. Youssef Ghorab. I went on to compete in national shows until I was 18 then I started competing in small international shows in Europe where I won the 6 bar show in Lowville, France. At 21 years of age, I travelled to Saudi Arabia where I currently reside and train. By that time, what is called the World Cup Arab League was constituted, and this is how I have managed to compete.

Latest achievements:

As soon as I finished university I moved to Saudi; at that time I was riding the Egyptian Federation's horse 'Castro' who helped me a lot in A Class shows even though he was not qualified to be a team horse. I worked hard with him to make him



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compete with other horses even though he wasn't supposed to jump this level. In Saudi, a variety of horses were available which enhanced my training. I am currently part of the national Egyptian show jumping team and I compete in the Arab League; during Seif Al Sham international event in Syria, we came in 2nd as a team, and I came in 2nd place on the individual level riding 'Casper'. The 2007/2008 season was quite a good season and very successful for me, though I didn't start with 'Casper' I started with a horse called 'Al Mandoob' who helped me come in 6th place at the Dubai Grand Prix, 1st in the Sharjah Grand Prix, and 4th in Abu Dhabi. I also competed in Bahrain where I rode in the qualifier for the Grand Prix and came in 4th with the same horse, but unfortunately I didn't ride during the Grand Prix because the majority of riders faced problems with the show's organisation and most of us decided not to compete. At the show in Qatar, I came 1st in the Grand Prix qualifier and 3rd in the Grand Prix. Finally, during the last event of the Arab League 2008 season in Syria, I came in 5th place during Bassel Al Assad Grand Prix and 6th in Seif Al Sham's.

Training in Saudi, sponsorship & the 2009 season:

I am being trained by Samir Abdel Fattah, the trainer of the Egyptian team who has supported my training since I was 16. I train with him almost everyday; he's a fantastic man who knows a lot about horses and a great manager as well. My sponsor Dr. Khalid Al Jeraisy is a rider and a comfortable man to work with; he provides

me with a lot of space and freedom which is why I have continued working with him for 5 years now. He doesn't own a club; he sponsors me through one of his companies called 'Al- Alouka', the name written across my riding gear. We ride at Khalid Al Eid's stables because it is preferable for us to gain experience from him. Al Eid also helps us with a lot of our technical problems; he's a very decent person and I'm very grateful for all that he has taught me.

For the 2009 season, I will be riding a new mare called 'Ravanta' who is 9 years old and very promising. She is owned by my sponsor. I will also be riding another mare, 'Oshima' who is the full sister of 'Al Mandoob'; another very good mare, along with 'Ronnie' who I am preparing for the Qatar and Sharjah shows.

Future aspirations & the Arab League:

To compete at the Olympic Games of course! I'd prefer calling it a goal, not a dream; I just have to work as hard as I can to reach Olympic levels. To train in Europe is an option, but it would be unwise of me to go now although I've received some offers from there, however I wouldn't find the same horse power and finances as I do in Saudi. There are more than 20 horses available for riding at Al Jeraisy stables, the majority of which can jump Grand Prix levels, which is difficult to find at any other stable. The Arab League is now very strong and we have the same competitions as in Europe, almost the same courses. I have competed before in Europe; the only problem was speed as their horses are much faster than ours; it's like comparing

a Lamborghini to a Mercedes. Their horses are better and are therefore more expensive, but it can be done. There are riders who have normal horses and believe they could compete with European riders. An example for that would be Khalid Al Eid and Ramzy El Duhami; Khalid has an Olympic bronze medal and Ramzy qualified for the Grand Prix during the 2008 Olympics. He could have won if lady luck was on his side. Those are riders we should look up to as idols and ones that make us believe that we could do it, and do what they did at the Olympics. I believe Khalid broke a very big barrier between us and Europeans. I believe that staying here, with the Arab League, would be a wise choice for everyone...we have fantastic facilities from footings to arenas such as the ones in Sharjah, Qatar and Syria's indoor arena.

Criticism of the Arab League & its lack of top competition:

Everybody wants everything on the spot...to be successful and to get medals on the spot! But everyone has to work very hard and we have to work 20 times harder than European riders because they breed their own horses, keep the good ones for themselves and never sell them outside of Europe, thus this is something we have to do for ourselves, we have to start breeding our own horses. We have to start getting the know-how and start working together. As such, surely in the next 4 years many Arab riders will acquire mileage.

Family support:

Samir Abdelfattah's is not just my trainer, but I consider him to be part of my family; we have very good and bad days together but he never lets me down. He was always the one there for me. Khalid Al Jeraisy is a man that has been supporting me financially for 5 years; his support has helped me gain some success. My family provide me with emotional support and want me to do what's best for me even though it's very difficult for them to cope with all this both financially and time wise because they have their own lives and can't travel around with me everywhere. HT