

## Rider's Profile Series

# TOP GUNS

### Karim Zohair El Sobky



Karim, born 18/2/1971, the youngest son of Gen. Zohair El Sobky, was fascinated with horses at an early age. His father used to encourage him to ride, and young Karim enjoyed it to the extent that he used to skip his tennis lesson to go watch the horses. B.G Bakir who was in charge of the armed forces at that time, took in Karim and formed a strong and personal, as well as professional, relation between the riders, their horses, and one another. Taking Adham Hammad and Andre Sakakini as his role models, Karim was soon motivated to move into the competitive circuit. His first junior title was during the season of 1986/1987 as he won 3<sup>rd</sup> place on "El Basha". Karim as an ambitious rider, joined training with Egypt's great Olympic riders Omar El Hadary and Gamal Haress, to mention a few, whom he till this day feels great gratitude towards for developing his horsemanship. His first Grade "A" appearance was in 1992 on "Grey Amber". The couple traveled with the Egyptian team competing in Jordan, that same year, winning all 3 days of the competition. They finished 3<sup>rd</sup> the first day, 1<sup>st</sup> in the speed class and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the grand prix, which was a surprise for everybody as it was the first international competition for Karim. Gen. Gamal Haress had chosen him not on point basis, but based on his competitive attitude. In 1994 Karim finally graduated from the Medical School of Dentistry, Cairo University. He admitted how difficult it had been to manage both riding and becoming a doctor, but he managed giving up some of his social life. "Eastern Ambition" was the catalyst for Karim's real emergence. Together they competed at the Pan Arab Games in Lebanon 1997 and twice at Bassel El Assad's Grand Prix in Syria. They achieved the title of the Federation Cup summer season 1998, and finally 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Grade "A" for the season 1998/1999. That same year Karim won 1<sup>st</sup> place in Grade "B" riding his charismatic "Mr. Redly." The couple finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in Grade "A" this season. Now Karim is riding both "Mr. Redly" and his new promising mare "Calando" on whose back he finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the Grand Prix of the Egyptian Friendship tournament Feb.2000.

\* Why are you in this sport ?

Addiction.

\* Would you recommend showjumping for the new generation ?

Of course.

\* What area of the sport do you see yourself becoming involved in when your competitive riding days are over ?

I'll try to help the young people as much as I can but without a formal relation.

\* Are you worried about the future of the sport ? What improvements/ changes could be made to insure the welfare of the sport ?

Yes, I see if we want to open to international circuit, we have to attract sponsors and get more money involved in the sport. We have to introduce and do more riding professional clinics, as well as travelling to compete abroad on regular basis.

\* How would you describe yourself ?

I'm calm, and I have a lot of patience. As a rider, I think I have the guts.

\* What are the best things about you ?

Nothing. Nobody is perfect.

\* What are the worst ?

I am a bad loser.

\* What are your plans for 2000 - 2001 ?

I opened my office one year ago, I need to concentrate on my career. For competition, I have a very good mare 'Calando' and I have a very good trainer 'Samir Abdel Fattah'. I think I have to use both to improve and to be next year's Grade A winner.

### Adham Kabary Hammad

Adham, born 8/1/1958, the youngest son of the great rider Kabary Hammad. Like father like son, he was brought up in a world full of horses and he started riding at the early age of three.

In 1964 he competed in the National junior championships for under 14 at the early age of six, which was his first year of competition. He won his first junior title the following season riding "Mambo" and as he took his father as his role model, he decided that this was his game. In 1984 he made his first Grade

Photo-Tamer El Nashar



'A' victory, riding the unforgettable "Last Chance". Together they won the following ten consecutive years, making themselves the only couple ever to win the Egyptian title ten times in the Egyptian Equestrian history. It has occasionally been suggested that the Grade 'A' trophy should be designed as "Adham and Last Chance figure" just like the Hickstead Derby trophy which was designed for Macken & Boomerang after winning the Derby three years in a row. The couple also had numerous international victories back in 1993 winning the Grand Prix of Vichy-France. Adham and the Egyptian Equestrian world was later that year stunned by the death of the great "Last Chance", however, Adham was fortunately supported with "Vision Babbier", a French Selles Francais mare. Adham stayed out of the Grade 'A' for a whole year as "Vision" was still a 6 year-old competing in small classes.

With "Vision" he was crowned the Egyptian Champion in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998. He also won the individual silver medal at the Pan Arab games Lebanon 1997, and was two times winners of Basel El Assad Grand prix in Syria 1997 & 1998. In 1998 "Vision" got medical problems in her front leg, leaving her lame and out of the competition circuit. Adham's last Grade 'A' appearance was the season of 1998/1999 riding 'Panda'.

Adham joined the Egyptian team last year in the Pan Arab games in Jordan winning the team a silver medal riding "Compromise". Currently, Adham is looking for a sponsor to help him get back into the ring, and till then he will keep doing what it is he does best, which is ride.

\* Why are you in this sport ?

Born in it.

\* Would you recommend showjumping for the new generation ?

They have to have the money to support themselves, otherwise not.

\* What area of the sport do you see yourself becoming involved in when your competitive riding days are over ?

In training on a very small scale.

I would like to have one or two young riders as I did several times before and do some schooling for them to produce one or two of the top riders in Egypt.

\* Are you worried about the future of the sport ? What improvements/ changes could be made to insure the welfare of the sport ?

For sure.... Sponsorship.

\* How would you describe yourself ?

The worst rider ever.

\* What are the best things about you ?

I never feel that I am a champion.

In order to avoid what I would call the "arrogance phase".

\* What are the worst ?

When I hate a horse.

The horse is really in trouble.

\* What are your plans for 2000 - 2001 ?

Find a sponsor or a good horse with a reasonable price that I can afford.