

Unexpected results in Alexandria Et Sharm El Sheikh CSI-W show jumping event

By Ahmed Talaat

One can only feel tremendous pride, especially as an Egyptian, in attending two grand equestrian shows such as those held in Alexandria and Sharm El Sheikh last November. Kings Ranch in Alexandria, is an exceptional equestrian center boasting a super fiber sand arena, while the Concord El Salam, in Sharm El Sheikh, is ground to one of Egypt's top hotel and features an excellent grass arena, with a beautiful beach and year round perfect weather as nature's own backdrop.

In preparation for the events, I was privileged to work with two of the top course designers in the world, whom brought different methods of design to each course. In Alexandria was the German Werner Deeg, one of the top official international course designers in the world, and in Sharm El Sheikh, also the German Olat Peterson senior, who gained critical acclaim for his design of last year's Olympic Games in Athens. Each of those two designers had his unique way of doing things. Petersen looked at designs differently and Deeg had a special way of designing his courses by putting all of the distances in the combinations, in one loop. By that, one cannot take a rest in the middle of the course, and has to be really attentive throughout the show.

The results were excellent. A bumpy ride for European riders logistically, was thankfully forgiven and forgotten upon arrival to Sharm El Sheikh given the wonderful venue and excellent weather. Kings Ranch's facilities exceeded their expectations and proved to be a huge success with the riders. We were also complemented on our friendliness and helpfulness.

"I was unlucky in Sharm El Sheikh but I really enjoyed my time in Egypt," said Claudia Hertel, a German competitor in the show. On the first day in Alex., Hertel won the 12th place in the big tour and 4th in the small one. She then won 9th place in the grand prize on the fourth day. In Sharm El Sheikh, Hertel won the small tour and had one down in all other rounds.

The events saw an impressive participation and performance from many Egyptian riders. Alaa Maysarah Habash won fifth place in Sharm El Sheikh with Darios (Sameh Hatab's horse), whom he had only rode three times before. His own mare Karta, had undergone some health problems prohibiting its participation. However, Habash's strong effort and persistence, together with the help of Hatab, kept him in the lead of the Arabian league.

Hadi Sami Gabr won first place in Alexandria's grand prize with his talented eight-year old horse El Mandoub. Gabr competed in the A2 class and the A1, just one show before the international. His performance could have gained him Sharm's grand prize, if it weren't for his horse falling down before the last line in the 1st round of the grand prize.

The youngest rider in both shows, was Islam Amr Eid,



Marc Ostendorf



Abdualla Sharbatly



Ahmed Talaat & Jorg Boukmann

a 16-year-old who did a really good job in the whole competition and surprised people with his amazing technique. Eid won the junior class and was placed in the two grand prizes.

The fourth champion was Ahmed Ashraf Bassiouni, 17 years old, who competed in the big tour and the grand prize with his mare Temptation. Bassiouni competed in the A2 in the national competitions and did a clear round in the two grand prizes.

Among the competitors in the event was Marc Ostendorf, Owner of Farnos, a Stud farm in Germany. Ostendorf brought two of his famous riders, Karl Brockx from Germany & Gerald Gessink from the Netherlands to compete in the show. Ostendorf's horse had a colic between the two rounds, thus, he couldn't finish the second round and retired. He then couldn't compete in the Sharm El Sheikh tournament.

Another champion in the competition was Abdallah El Sharbatly, from Saudi Arabia, who won several prizes in the two tournaments and had two of the top horses in the competition. El Sharbatly won second place in both grand prizes.

The winner of the Grand prize was the Olympic rider Ibrahim Bisharat who came to Egypt with the same horse he competed with in the 2004 Olympics. Bisharat wasn't lucky in the first grand prize where he took the last fence down, but in Sharm El Sheikh, he won the first in the grand prize after a perfect, double-clear rounds.

"It was a great show, and I would love to come here again next year if there were any more shows," said England's Sophie Tobin, who came 3rd in the accumulator competition, and 7th in the grand prize in Alex. Moreover, Tobin won 7th place in the two phase competition and 9th in the grand prize in Sharm El Sheikh.

German horse owner, Jorg Beukmann was impressed with the caliber of Egyptian riders. "I thought that competing with Egyptian riders was an easy task, however, the opposite was proven," Beukmann said. ■



Top: Hadi Gabr in Pitze with Eng. A. Ragab, Mr. & Mrs. Samir Abdel Fatah & his Exe. Gov. of Alexandria

Middle: Karim Hamdy, Ahmed Ragab, Mohamed Sahry, Mohamed El Borji, Alaa Maysara, Ahmed Talaal, Samih El Kabib & Amr Magdi

Bottom right: Ahmed Talaal in jumping arena