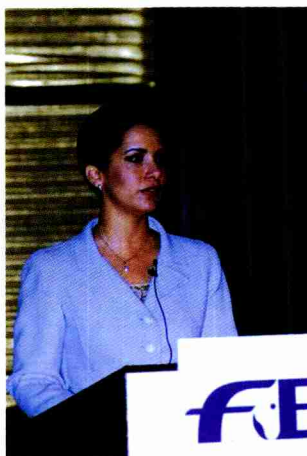


Princess Haya bnt Al Hussein

Wins the Hearts & Minds of the Equestrian World to the Presidency of the FEI

By Gen. Samy Negm El Din



HRH Princess Haya

For the first time in the history of the 'Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI)' or any international sport federation, an Arab lady presides. Three candidates were selected for this position;

HRH Princess Benedikte of Denmark

Mr. Freddy Serpieri - from Greece (The FEI 1st vice president for the last 9 years)

HRH Princess Haya Bnt Al Hussein of Jordan

Each of the three candidates had a different approach in preparation of their campaign which reflected their personal background, education, culture, and personal profile. They started their campaigns long before the FEI General Assembly meetings in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia which was held at the 'Sunway Lagoon Resort' from April 26th till May 2nd 2006.

A lot of communications went on with each candidate trying hard to figure out what were their chances and possibilities, what approaches could be more attracting and how to present their future programmes for better performances, sport progress and effective management of the FEI. Moreover, try to guarantee votes from the National Federations with the help of personal contacts and all other possible resources.



HRH Princess Haya, new FEI President with Gen. Samy & Mr. Al Fairuze, President of the Omani Equestrian Federation

As a rational observer, analytical Virgo, a retired Police General, I was asked to give my opinion to different parties. I found myself amid the election battle field trying to observe, listen, and evaluate all available facts and information to form an opinion. All of the three candidates sent their printed profiles to the voters by mail. Printed materials of HRH Princess Benedikte of Denmark were very elegant as herself, modern and professionally done, with a touch of a Princess from the Royal Danish Family introducing herself to her Danish citizens.

The simplest of all was the one given by Mr. Serpieri which depended mainly on the mere facts of his long services to the International Equestrian Community and some photographs of those activities along the years. However, it lacked the final touch of the modern publications which to him was not of much importance as of his achievements which were known to everybody.

HRH Princess Haya bnt Al Hussein of Jordan presented the profile which she named 'Manifesto' which proved to be the most professional. Starting with programmes, ideas, and different visions for the campaign which were very elegantly presented, full of possible achievements and ending with an implementation plan.

Two days before the Election Day, the lobbies of the Sunway Lagoon Resort witnessed side meetings for each candidate and their supporting teams to finalise, polish and fine tune the last minutes of their campaign. HRH Princess Benedikte of Denmark was the first to mingle with everybody, move between tables and groups to introduce

introduce herself to the voters. To some of them she was a total stranger and to others she was known as a Royal Princess who had never been around and close before that. Elegantly and royally presenting herself, she relied the most on her Royal Status to gain Western & European votes. Mr. Serpieri was casually moving mainly between standing groups and individuals trying to sense what were the opinions and directions of the voters. I felt his worries and sensed his fear of losing some votes especially from the FEI Bureau. Nonetheless he held himself gracefully with the support of his beloved Mrs. Serpieri who was by his side most of the time. HRH Princess Haya bnt Al Hussein of Jordan was the last to show at the lobby. Her supporting team paved the lobby for the first day and along with all representatives of the FEI Group VII (Arab National Federations) who acted as her personal representatives. She was so simple, elegant and confident... as if she was sending a message to everybody noting that the matter is finished, I'm here to thank you for choosing me. The only moment that I felt her being tense was on the evening before the Presentations and Debate when she attended the Official dinner of the Asian Equestrian Federation. She feared a late end to it, which might affect her personal plans to get herself prepared for the coming final cavalcade of the campaign next day. To me, that was a very most appreciated sense of responsibility.

The final chapter of this unique FEI Presidential Election was held in the big conference room where each of the three candidates were given 15 minutes to present their presentations and the order was determined according to



With HRH Princess Infanta Duna Pillar, FEI former President

a draw to be followed by questions from the voters to the Candidates. Again Mr. Serpieri presented himself as Freddy who has been and always will be Freddy for everybody. He explained his previously presented printed profile and emphasised on his leading role for the development programmes of the FEI during the last four years. He promised to continue on doing so and keep the same three FEI disciplines in the Olympic Games. HRH Princess Benedikte of Denmark acted, more or less, in the same way as Mr. Freddy. She added a personal touch by telling the audiences about her son & daughter and their career in the Equestrian field which she supported as a mother. As for HRH Princess Haya bnt Al Hussein of Jordan, she gave a summary of what was presented in her 'Manifesto' which was to prove her goodwill of enhancing the capabilities and performance of the FEI. She surprised the audiences with a very generous contribution of 20 million euros presented to the FEI. To me, this contribution was of no relevant importance at all to the voting results, which to my estimation, was decided long before those moments even before the presentation and the to be followed debates and questions.

When the debates & questions from the attendees started to the three candidates, again, HRH Princess Haya was the most prepared in answering back and giving proper and fully detailed answers which again showed how professionally her campaign was organised.

On the voting session, the results of the first round were as follows:

HRH Princess Bnt Al Hussein of Jordan – 68 votes

Freddy Serpieri – 52 votes

HRH Princess Benedikte of Denmark – 16 votes

Consequently, HRH Princess Benedikte was eliminated. As neither of the candidates had received a 2/3 majority as required by the FEI Statutes, the voting continued with a second round.

The results of the second round were as follows:

HRH Princess Haya Bnt Al Hussein of Jordan – 82 votes

Freddy Serpieri – 52 votes

A 2/3 majority was also required for the second round, which neither of the two candidates obtained (according to the number of valid ballots, the 2/3 majority consisted of 89 votes). However, Freddy Serpieri chose to withdraw and congratulate HRH Princess Haya who was declared the winning candidate.

This result was an honour to the Arab World that indicates the start of a new era to the FEI mainly depending on new blood, professional marketing and strategic planning as well as a lot of hopes for development & improvement. On the FEI General Assembly official dinner, everybody celebrated the birthday of the new FEI President. ■

A remarkable birthday for a remarkable President