

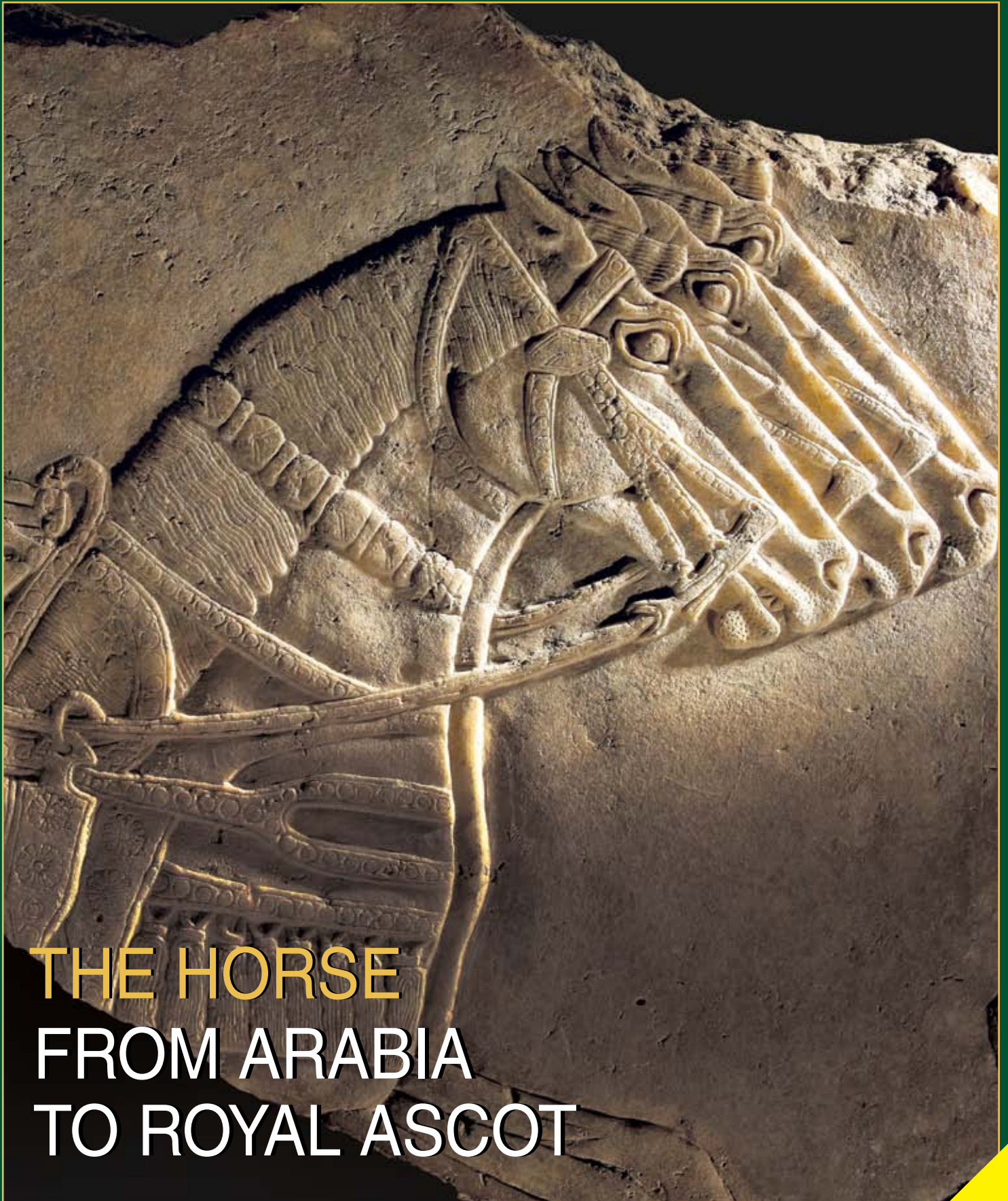
HORSE TIMES



no. 40

Winter 2012

THE MOST RENOWNED EQUESTRIAN MAGAZINE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THE HORSE FROM ARABIA TO ROYAL ASCOT

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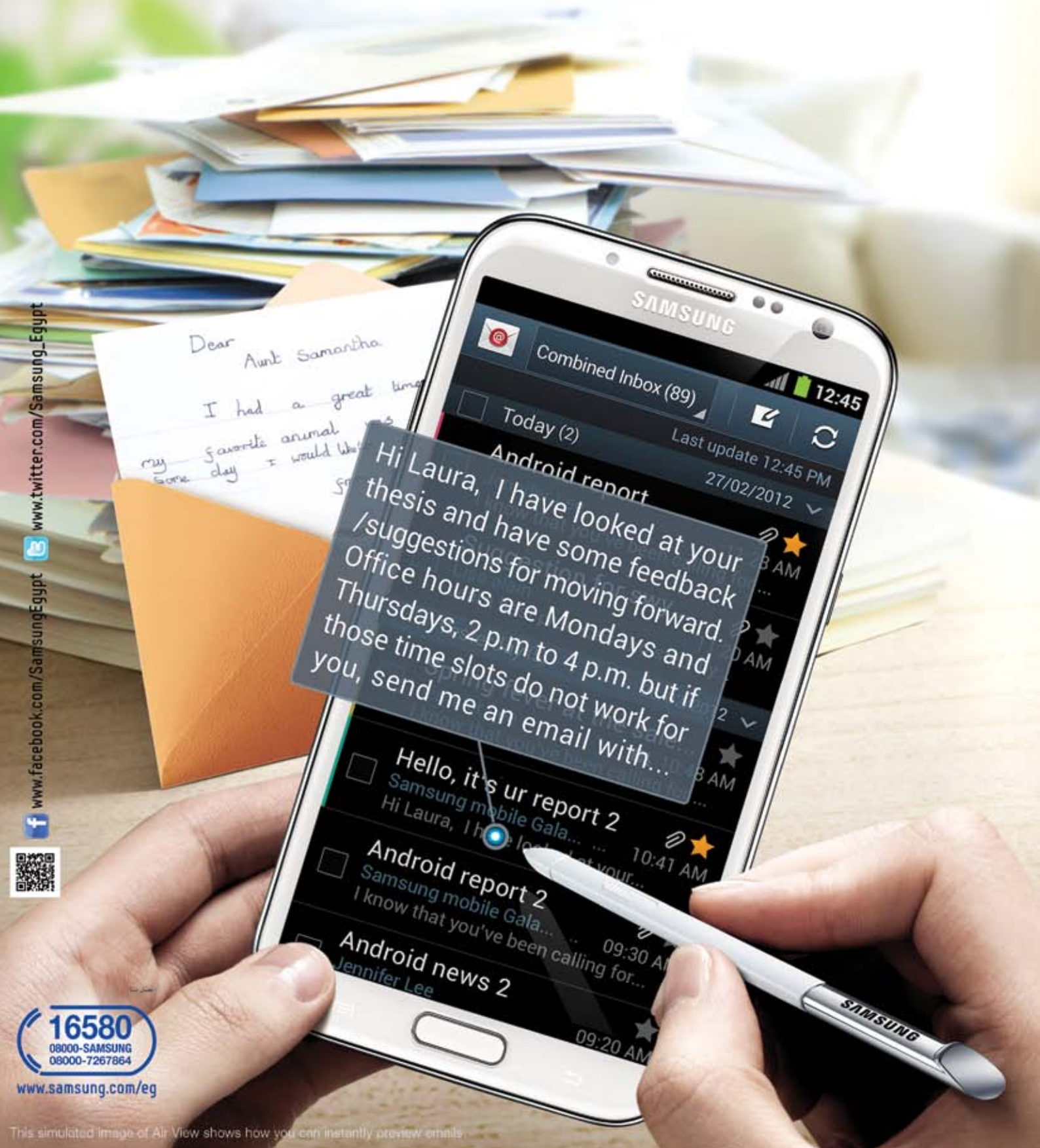
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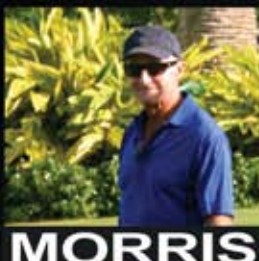
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VIEW POINT

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear Readers,

Let me start by wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and a happier new year! This 2013 the magazine will celebrate its 16th year and we all are hoping for a new year of peace, security, stability and prosperity for all.

In this final issue for 2012, we

kick off our content with culture, 'The Horse: From Arabia To Royal Ascot', in which we showcase a remarkable exhibit which was put on by the British Museum this summer tracing the evolution of the Arabian horse from the desert to the famous race courses of Britain. The exhibit included many extraordinary ancient and modern artefacts depicting this evolution, some of which we present here.

We continue with two amazing role models of persistence, commitment and patience: 71 year old Olympian Hiroshi Hoketsu representing Japan in London 2012 for the 4th time, and France's Alexandra Ledermann in a wide-ranging interview where we learn about her true character and ambitions.

We train our periscope next on the young Olympian eventer Thailand's Nina Ligon; she tells us about her climb to the London Olympics and her experience there. And in a fun vein, we feature Jordan's Ibrahim Bisharat as he tells us what people really don't know about him.

On to technical topics, we interview two esteemed Arab show jumping

judges with plenty of background and experience under their wings: Jordan's Ali Al Sharif and Egypt's Dr. Abu Bakr Hashem. Reading their views, you realise that, for these two judges, show jumping is not just a sport, but truly a passion. We round out the issue with our alternative therapy, training and medical advice columns with Lady Coleen Heller's narrative account of her horse healing experiences, technical training tips on how to better develop riding skills through balance, understanding and communication, and Dr. Oz's medical article on how to investigate poor performance with field exercise testing.

Finally, we are very proud to say we have completed and published our hard-cover special edition of the London Equestrian Olympics. It contains over 200 stunning photographs by professional photographer Cymon Taylor, a memento of a few special days in Greenwich Park. It will be available as PDF on our website and hard copies will be at our offices.

Sincerely,

Khaled Assem

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THE HORSE FROM ARABIA TO ROYAL ASCOT

By Bridget McArdle McKinney



Beautifully detailed fragment of Assyrian wall relief – c. 875-860 BC, Nimrud, North-west Palace, Assyrian

A STUNNING, ELEGANT AND SWEEPING DISPLAY OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE THOROUGHBRED FROM ITS ARABIAN ORIGINS.

To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II and auspiciously coinciding with the Summer Olympics in London, the remarkable exhibition "The Horse: from Arabia to Royal Ascot" was presented at the British Museum this summer and early fall. An extraordinarily refined and comprehensive depiction of the Arabian horse through the ages, from prehistoric rock paintings, Assyrian ceramics, and ancient Egyptian tomb renderings, to 18th century oil paintings of British racehorse legends and souvenirs of Ascot races past, as well as historically important and beautiful pieces of tack, equipment and trappings, this exhibit, sponsored chiefly by the Saudi Equestrian Fund, chaired by HRH Prince Faissal ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad Al-Saud, was an event not-to-be-missed and an event long-to-be-remembered.

The theme of this exhibit, "From Arabia to Royal Ascot", runs a thread through history from the appearance of the horse as a domesticated animal in the Arabian Peninsula in the second century BC (and perhaps, according to recent research, as early as the fourth century

BC evidenced by discoveries of rock art of horses and hunting scenes at Uqulah and Al-Sinyam, Saudi Arabia) to the model racing Thoroughbred of today. That thread is the development of the desert Arabian horse into the British horse bred for speed. While plans were well advanced to enhance the native British and Irish breeds by the introduction of Arabian bloodlines in the 17th century, the pedigree of all modern Thoroughbreds is traced to three Arabian foundation stallions standing in the 18th century, Byerley Turk, the Darley Arabian, and the Godolphin Arabian.

Such an exhibit would not be complete without reference made to the important contribution of Wilfred and Lady Anne Blunt and their Crabbet Stud in the introduction and efforts to maintain the purity of the Arabian horse in the 19th century.

The exhibition was both rich and varied as well as very informative without being dry or too academic and included several entertaining interactive displays which actively engaged the eager attendees, such as an amazing display of ancient rock art depicting men, horses and hunting scenes from the recent Saudi Arabian discoveries just mentioned, which played across the wall of the hall at the touch of a finger, providing greater detail and information as may be needed. High tech for pre-historic art! And a little personal video

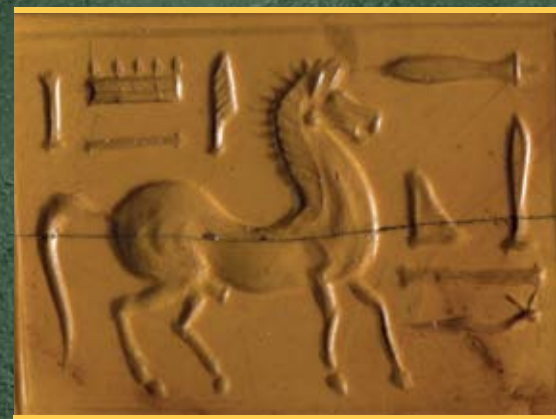
of Her Majesty as a happy and excited young princess at Ascot before her ascension.

The accompanying catalogue and book by chief curators John Curtis and Nigel Tallis stands truly on its own for its background, historical context, and beautiful display and will be a welcomed and oft-reviewed part of our collection at home.

Support for the exhibition was also provided by Layan Cultural Foundation and Juddmonte, in association with the Saudi Commission for Tourism & Antiquities, the King Abdulaziz Arabian Horse Centre and the King Abdulaziz Public Library. 🇸🇦

For more information and a view of more of the collection, please refer to : http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/exhibitions/the_horse.aspx

**All photos copyright: Trustees of the British Museum*



Fine yellow jasper ring stone inscribed with the hieroglyphics for 'he is strong' & on the reverse 'steadfast of heart' – c. 1550 – 1298 BC, 18th Dynasty, New Kingdom, Egyptian



Assyrian wall relief showing a bull hunt on chariot & horseback – c. 875-860 BC, Nimrud, North-west Palace, Assyrian

A silver commemorative token of the famous Craven Meeting between Hambletonian & Diamond at Newmarket





Hambletonian token, reverse side



Three galloping horses which might have come from a manuscript of the Shahnameh depicting the capture of the stallion Rakhsh by Rustam – c. 1550 AD, Safavid, Iran

Elegant bronze oil lamp with horse-head handle – 50-150 AD, Qasr Ibrim, Egypt





The great Eclipse being held while his jockey John Oakley approaches at Newmarket Heath. Eclipse was an undefeated Thoroughbred racehorse & a distinguished sire

Grand Stand, Ascot, Gold Cup Day 1839, packed with spectators. Notice to the right is the Royal Box, which is flying the Royal Standard indicating Queen Victoria's presence at the race



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HIROSHI HOKETSU

STILL IN THE SADDLE

By Bridget McArdle McKinney

COUNTRY: JAPAN

DATE OF BIRTH: MARCH 28 1941

STAR SIGN: ARIES

PROFESSION: DRESSAGE RIDER

A TRUE ROLE MODEL OF PERSISTENCE, PATIENCE, COMMITMENT, AND CONCENTRATION, DRESSAGE RIDER HIROSHI HOKETSU IS STILL IN THE SADDLE AT 71 YEARS OF AGE. INCREDIBLY, THE LONDON 2012 SUMMER OLYMPICS WAS HOKETSU'S FOURTH TIME REPRESENTING JAPAN IN THE OLYMPICS AND HE WAS THE OLDEST OLYMPIAN PARTICIPATING THIS YEAR AND THE THIRD OLDEST COMPETING EVER.



Why at this grand old age with a successful business and horse career behind him, would Hoketsu return to the rigours and deprivations of Olympic preparation? It turns out that when he retired, his wife encouraged him to return to competitive riding and he took her up on her advice. This decision would mean dedicating himself completely to training and preparation in Aachen with his coach, and as a result leaving his wife and family back in Japan. He says that he is inspired by improvement.

His coaches have had a long-term leading role in his development. As he explained to HT: “Mr. Antonie (Ton) de Ridder has had the most influence on me. I am and have been working with him for nine years since I came to Germany. Mr. Lorenz Rageth and Mr. Henk Von Bergen were the ones who introduced me to European Dressage 30 years ago.” Now, that’s 30 years since Hoketsu began dressage; before that he was a champion show jumper. He competed in show jumping in the 1964 Summer Olympics – over 48 years ago!

Hoketsu also credits his mounts for his success. He lists them with pride: “I have ridden so many horses during the last 60 years. Among those the following were the memorable horses:


- a) Whisper was a jumper I rode in 1963 and 1964 who made me qualify as a member of Japanese jumping team.
- b) Balthazar gave me two silver medals for the team and individual dressage competitions at the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul.
- c) Casper won the Japan National Dressage Championship for 5 consecutive years from 1988 to 1992. He also made me qualify as a member of the Japanese dressage team for Seoul Olympics in 1988.
- d) Whisper 115 took me to two Olympic Games: 2008 Beijing and 2012 London. She also gave me several chances to listen to the Japanese National Anthem at international dressage competitions in Europe.”

He could also credit his spare and busy training regime. “I wake up at seven am”, he explains, “and do stretch exercise for 30 minutes and eat breakfast and ride two horses in the morning. After lunch, I work two to three hours for my business and go back to the stable to walk the horse by hand or by riding. After that I come home and do fitness and stretch exercise for 45 minutes and take a shower. I go out to eat half of the week and the rest of the days I cook dinner by myself. This is my routine life.” This is the life of a serious athlete.

Whatever horse or regime one has,

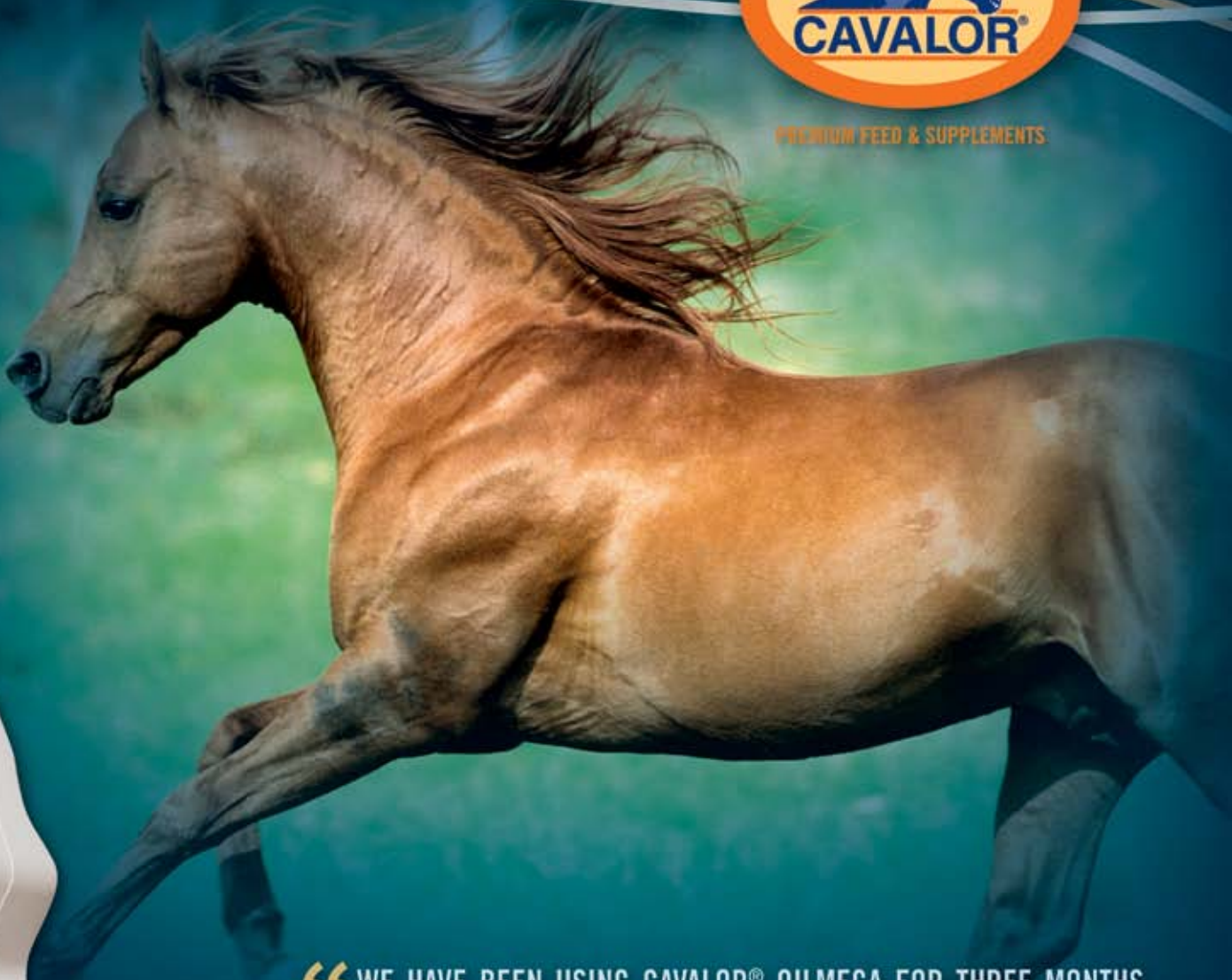
official support comes in handy and Hoketsu recognises the support of the Japanese Equestrian Federation over the course of his riding career, saying, “At the time of the Tokyo Olympics, the Federation owned the jumping horses and let selected riders ride them. They have stopped this type of support after Tokyo but they bear the transportation costs for the Olympics and World Equestrian Games. They also give a lot of support in the area of communications and administrative works.”

Hoketsu has been an inspiration to athletes around the world; we asked him what advice he would give to young athletes. He responded thoughtfully: “If this old man can inspire the athletes around the world, I am very, very happy. I would like to say to young athletes ‘Set your own objective and never give up. As long as you can keep motivating yourself, your challenge will be realised.’ Words of wisdom, the wisdom of the ages.

So, the big question – what about the 2016 Summer Olympics? Will Hoketsu be there? While he hemmed and hawed a bit immediately following London and said that his 15-year-old Whisper wouldn’t be going due to age, he hasn’t to our knowledge actually said ‘No’. And we would not be a bit surprised to see this ‘old man’ in Rio in 2016. 



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ALEXANDRA LEDERMANN

FULL OF HEART

By **Nada H. Abdelmoniem**

COUNTRY: FRANCE

DATE OF BIRTH: MAY 14 1969

STAR SIGN: TAURUS

PROFESSION: SHOW JUMPING RIDER & COMPANY
MANAGER

ALEXANDRA LEDERMANN, THE 1996 ATLANTA OLYMPICS SHOW JUMPING INDIVIDUAL BRONZE MEDALLIST AND FIRST EUROPEAN FEMALE SHOW JUMPING CHAMPION, IS A VERY SPECIAL COMBINATION OF BUSINESS SAVVY AND HORSEWOMAN. SHE IS PERCEIVED TO BE INTIMIDATING AND AS SHARP AND HARD AS A DIAMOND ON THE OUTSIDE BUT INSIDE, SHE IS SHY, KIND, AND GENUINE. FULL OF HEART, SHE HAS STEPPED EARLY INTO THE GAME BECAUSE SHE IS TRUE TO HERSELF AND HER HORSES. SEEMINGLY FULL OF BRIGHT NEW IDEAS AND VENTURES, SHE IS A BUSINESSWOMAN WHO IS PASSIONATELY INVOLVED IN HER CLOTHING LINES, ENTERTAINING COMIC STRIPS AND VIDEO GAMES.....UNTIL SHE STEPS BACK INTO THE BIG SHOW JUMPING SCENE AGAIN.

◀ *Alexandra with 7-year old Requiem de Talma (gelding by Dobel's Cento), the horse with whom she places her biggest hopes for the future*



▲ Alexandra on Zues during HORSES & HOPES' horse trials in Cairo. In 3 days, they connected like they knew each other for years & were placed 10th in the GP

Please tell us about your coaches that have had the most influence on you?

All throughout my career I have been taught by only one person, my father Jean-Pierre Ledermann. He taught me everything I know. Above all he gave me knowledge of the horses, and allowed me to become a true horsewoman.

Tell us about your daily riding routine?

Nothing special for a rider...riding my horses, and going to the shows at the end of the week. And also taking care for my own brands: clothing line (sale online: www.alexandra-ledermann.fr), video games, books and comic strips.

Tell us about your horses and the ones who have left a mark on your riding career?

First of all, my ponies allowed me to become what I am; they taught me how to go very fast on a jump-off, to

win and to want to always win more! But the horse which definitely marked my career is unquestionably Rochet M. He offered me my most beautiful victories and my most beautiful titles. He was incredible, like a continuation of myself, despite the fact that he was quite difficult to ride.

But I do not forget that without those who preceded him, no success of that kind would have arrived. I won my first 1.50 m Grand Prix at the age of 18 with Natfot, a small horse born and bred at home. Then the mare Punition, also born at home, helped me out to start on the big international courses, by offering me one of my most beautiful victories in the World Cup Grand Prix in Paris-Bercy in 1992, and a qualification for the World Cup Finale at Del Mar, California (USA).

Following that, Mr. Dominique Mars, a French businessman, decided to buy me a horse capable of allowing me to go to the Olympics. I chose Rochet...

Are you currently involved in breeding horses?

My entire career was built on breeding; it is thanks to the horses that my father brought up that I was able to reach the international level and cut my teeth before Rochet arrived in my stables. As my parents couldn't afford to buy me Grand Prix horses, breeding was the most economical solution. But also the most unpredictable! Breeding is not an exact science, and despite the fact that we continued breeding in which I was, of course, involved, the following years were not as lucky as the beginning...

Do you train? If yes, tell us about who you train?

I teach very occasionally. I like to teach riders already competing at good level so that I can really bring them concrete added value (this "little more" that might change everything). Even when I do train sometimes, to teach only during one or two days during a clinic is not my

favourite. In my opinion one to two days is not enough to fix up riders' and horses' problems. So I'd rather train somebody in the longer term. It is more rewarding for both parties.

I teach a classical French equitation, based on forward motion and balance. I noticed that most of the riders are afraid of speed consequently I teach them how to not be afraid, and how to love it! I'm convinced about the benefit of dressage for horses, but I think that too many riders force their horses without psychology. I teach them that control and liberty are not incompatible.

Tell us about your stud farm?

My stables are located in Normandy, 100 kms from west Paris. My parents arrived there in 1965 and created the actual riding school. At the moment the stables are shared between the riding school, the livery yard, the breeding horses, and the show jumping horses.

How has the French Equestrian Federation been involved in your riding career and does it currently support you in any way?

The French Equestrian Federation brings me no help at the moment, and I cannot really say that it helped me a lot in the past (no more than the other French riders, in fact).

Do you have any sponsors?

My current sponsors are Guibert (a shop selling luxury goods of equitation in Paris), Audevard (Laboratory of equine food complements), Royal Horse (horse food supplier), Butet (top of the range saddles), Cavalassur (insurances and credits for the equine world). They sell high quality products, and are fantastic people, I'm very lucky to work with them! And they are as faithful to me as I am to them; all of them have been supporting me for at least 10 years!

How does it feel like to be known as the first European female champion?

The public and the press made a fuss about it, but as soon as this

sport is better mixed, I personally don't see why it would be something exceptional. However, I recognise that to be the first one to achieve something rare is good. And I know it is something that I will keep for the rest of my life.

Tell us about your clothing line and video game?


The collection of video games started in 2000, when Ubisoft asked me to be the image of their future game based on horses and equitation (at this time there were no video games about horses and equitation in France). To date more than about 10 products were created for a total of more than one million sales. The release of the latest one is planned for the first quarter 2013.

I also have been co-writing a comic strip bearing my name that was released in October 2012. And I am at the present time co-writing a book of popularisation and advices for the children. Concerning my clothes line, it's a project that was very close to my heart for many years. The concept of feminine yet technical clothes, that we can wear when riding and competing, as well as in the city, seems to appeal greatly to a lot of women. Sales are excellent in France, but also in Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Portugal, Denmark, Germany, and even South Africa, Mexico and Australia!

You have been described as being "outspoken and having a fiery character". How would you comment to that?

I can tell you a bit more about my character: I am mostly described by my friends as being honest, spontaneous, sincere, and faithful. I'm also a perfectionist (what can sometimes be upsetting for my close relatives...), I'm a fighter and I never capitulate. On the show grounds I heard some people talking about me as a "warrior" when I'm in the arena. Paradoxically, I am very shy the rest of the time in everyday life. I also don't accept any compromise when the health of my horses is involved. I think about them first, and then the competition. They are my priority.

You are a champion and act like one; will people see you competing again in high-level competitions?

People will see me again in high-level competition as soon as I can get horses again which are able to jump those competitions! I would really love it!!! 

**Photos courtesy of Virginie Bruneau: 3bruneau@orange.fr - Juan Zamora: 3bruneau@orange.fr & Alezane: photoalezane@gmail.com*

▼ Alexandra on Requiem de Talma at Le Touquet, 2012



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Protein: ————— 14%

Fiber: Not less than — 12%

Fat: ————— 2-3%

Ash: ————— 5-7 %



PLUS VITAMINS

HOW TO KNOW THE BODY CONDITION SCORE OF YOUR HORSE

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
1	<u>Poor</u> – The horse is extremely emaciated. The backbone, ribs, hip bones, and tail head are all very prominent. The neck is hollow, and the bones of the shoulders, withers, and neck are easily noticeable. Individual vertebrae are clearly seen and easily felt. No fat can be felt anywhere.
2	<u>Very thin</u> – The horse is emaciated. The backbone is prominent and the ribs, tailhead and hipbones stand out. There is a slight fat covering over the vertebrae in the spine, but individual vertebrae are visible. The bones in the shoulders, withers and neck are faintly noticeable.
3	<u>Thin</u> – The backbone is prominent. The tailhead is evident, but individual vertebrae cannot be seen. Ribs are easily visible, but a slight fat layer can be felt over the ribs. Hipbones appear rounded, but they are easily seen. Neck, withers and shoulders are emphasized.
4	<u>Moderately thin</u> – The vertebrae produce a slight ridge along the back. A faint outline of the ribs is visible. The prominence of the tailhead depends on breed and conformation, but fat can be felt around the tailhead. Hipbones cannot be seen. Neck, withers and shoulders are not obviously thin.
5	<u>Moderate</u> – The horse's back is level. Fat around the tailhead appears spongy. Withers are rounded, and the shoulders and neck blend smoothly into the body. Ribs cannot be seen, but are easily felt.
6	<u>Moderately fleshy</u> – The horse may have a slight inverted crease along the spine as fat is built up along the back. Fat around the tailhead feels soft. Fat over the ribs feels spongy. Small deposits of fat are over the
7	<u>Fleshy</u> – The horse has an inverted crease along the spine as fat is built up along the back. Fat around the tailhead feels soft. Individual ribs can be felt, but there is noticeable filling between ribs with fat. Noticeable fat is over the withers, behind the shoulders and along the sides of the neck.
8	<u>Fat</u> – The horse has a noticeable inverted crease along the back. Fat around the tailhead feels very soft. Individual ribs are difficult to feel due to the fat in between. Noticeable thickening of the neck. The area over the withers is filled with fat. The space behind the shoulders is filled in and flush with the barrel of the horse. Fat is deposited along the inner buttocks.
9	<u>Extremely fat</u> – The horse has an obvious inverted crease along the back. Fat appears in patches over the rib area. Bulging fat appears over the tailhead, withers, neck and shoulders. Fat along inner buttocks may rub together and the flank is filled in flush with the barrel of the horse.

NUTRITIONAL TIPS FOR HEALTHY HORSES

- Horses should consume 1.5 to 3.0% of their body weight per day. At least 50%, probably more, of caloric requirements (80% of feed by weight of feed) of this should come from forages (grass and hay).
- Ample turn-out and grazing time is important and will help keep your horse from getting bored, if his digestive system is working as nature intended, however pasture is limited or unavailable, you can minimize the effects by feeding several small meals per day. Stabled horses should never be fed only one meal, but two works well for most horses. Three meals a day is better for horses under strenuous work such as endurance riding and three-day eventing.
- Don't ride your horse right after he finishes eating. Give him at least an hour after a big meal. Also don't feed him right after riding. Give him at least half an hour, longer if he is still hot. It is okay to ride a horse that has been eating hay or out on pasture.



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PERISCOPE ON NINA LIGON

By Khaled Assem

COUNTRY: THAILAND

DATE OF BIRTH: OCTOBER 8 1991

STAR SIGN: LIBRA

PROFESSION: EVENTING & FULL-TIME STUDENT AT
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

ALTHOUGH NINA LIGON HAS BEEN A DEDICATED HORSEWOMAN ALL HER LIFE, THE ROAD FROM FRESH MORNING GALLOPS ON THE BEACH IN HUA HIN, THAILAND, AS A CHILD TO PARTICIPATING IN THE EVENTING COMPETITION AT LONDON 2012 WAS COMPLEX AND DEMANDING. FROM THE AGE OF FIVE WHEN HER FAMILY MOVED TO VIRGINIA, USA, SHE KNEW WHERE SHE WAS HEADED AND WITH HER FAMILY'S SUPPORT SHE FOCUSSED ON GETTING THERE, BUILDING HER HORSES, IDENTIFYING THE APPROPRIATE OLYMPIC QUALIFIERS, CHASING POINTS AROUND THE WORLD. AND SHE SUCCEEDED IN BECOMING BOTH THE YOUNGEST PERSON IN THIS YEAR'S OLYMPIC EVENTING AND THE FIRST ASIAN WOMAN TO COMPETE IN EVENTING IN THE OLYMPICS. WITH THIS KIND OF DETERMINATION, WE'RE BOUND TO SEE A LOT MORE OF HER IN HIGH-LEVEL COMPETITION IN THE YEARS TO COME.





Federation were incredibly supportive.

Muang Thai Insurance in Thailand offered financial support. They also generously made team shirts for my cheering squad who came out in full force to support me at the Games. It was so inspiring to look up into the stands after my Dressage Test and see a sea of bright pink screaming and cheering me on.

Point Two has provided me with their state of the art protective air vests, which have upped the standard of safety in Equestrian sports.

I had 4 horses qualified to compete at London:

-Butts Leon I rode at the Games. Though we had less than a year to get to know each other, things really came together in London and I felt like we made a great team.

-Jazz King is an incredible, safe jumping horse. He is so consistent and reliable and we never had a XC jump penalty at the 3* level. He gave me so much XC confidence.

-Tipperary Liadhnan is a very experienced eventer. He gave me some very solid 3* mileage.

-Fernhill Fearless moved me up from the 1* to 3* level. He is without doubt, fearless, when it comes to XC yet in hand, is the gentlest horse I've ever met.

What's it been like since you got back from the Olympics?

After the Games, my horses got some well-deserved down time, and I got a chance to stay in London with my family to watch other events and get the full "Olympic Experience." After the Games were over, I only had a month to pack everything up and move out to California for university. Butts Leon has returned to Andreas Dibowski in Germany, Jazz King and Tipperary Liadhnan have gone to riders in the US to help them reach their goals, just as they helped me. Fernhill Fearless was injured in January, and though he is sound, I am giving him the next year to ensure a full recovery.

Were you pleased with your performance in London and what was it like for you when you arrived there?

Why did you decide to solely ride for Thailand?

There were a couple reasons. Though I grew up in the US, I was born in Thailand. I spent most of my childhood summers there, but between school and competition, I couldn't go back as often once I got older. Riding for Thailand was a chance to reconnect with my heritage. The US has plenty of good eventers and this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me to not only fulfil my dream of going to the Olympics and but also to represent Thailand in a growing sport. I never realised how much of an impact I would have on eventing in Thailand until I started competing under the Thai Flag. I hope that my journey will help inspire other

young Thai riders and keep equestrian sports thriving.

Who has had the greatest influence on your riding career?

Myself. My parents have always supported me and my trainers and horses helped shape me as a rider, but the dream was my own. I loved working with the horses and competing and that kept me motivated.

Tell us about your sponsors and horses?

I'm lucky to have an incredible support team and group of horses. The Sports Authority of Thailand, Thai Olympic Council, and Thai Equestrian

Though competing with the world's best is intimidating, I was surprised with how comfortable I felt once I got to the venue. I knew many of the riders; Team USA and Canada from competing in the US, Team Japan from the Asian Games, and Team Brazil from my UK barn. The Eventing community is pretty small but very supportive.

I was very happy with our performance in Dressage and XC. Leon and I gave a very accurate test, and I was really glad I managed to keep him relaxed despite the atmosphere of the stadium and the cheering crowds. Our partnership was at its strongest on cross country day. The course proved to be much trickier than anticipated, but I was determined to complete with a clear round and we did just that. I had a surprising stop in show jumping, which was disappointing, but we cleared the fence on the second attempt and we went on to jump an immaculate round. Leon and I have only been a team for one year. I was proud of how we strengthened our partnership and worked together to complete my first Olympics.

When did you first know you were going to the 2012 Olympics?

The qualifying period for the Games went from March 2011-March 2012, so I wasn't officially informed that I had a spot until that March 2012 deadline. Even still, you're never 100% certain you are going to the Olympics until you give your first salute on the centre line.

Explain what's involved in preparing for the Olympics and what it was like competing there?

It was hard not to be tempted to over-train in the months preceding the Games. I wanted to be prepared to give my best possible performance, but it was important to keep in mind that training too hard puts a lot of physical and mental strain on the horses. It was crucial that I listen to what each horse was telling me and that I tailor my training plan to suit each of their individual needs.

What was the show jumping and cross-country in London like?

The XC course in London ran through Greenwich Park. Leading up to the Games, it seemed the biggest concern for the eventers was to ensure our horses were fit enough to run the very hilly 10 minute course and be able to SJ two clear rounds the next morning.



The course seemed fair and inviting when walked on foot, so it came as a big surprise that there were 15 falls! Because the grass was so short, there was very little purchase and horses were slipping on the turns and hills of the very twisty course. I rode near the end of the day and was able to watch how the horses handled the ground, but it was incredibly nerve wracking to watch so many falls.

What training have you had to do to get to where you are now?

My training started as a five year old when I first began riding. Starting at a young age gave me a great foundation to build my eventing career on and I slowly worked my way up the levels to become a confirmed 3* rider. It was a pretty tall order to ride at the Olympics at such a young age, but given that I wanted to go to University and not become a professional rider, it was my only window. I had amazing trainers who supported my goals and helped me move safely up the levels.

What are the greatest challenges you face?

Injuries. The sport is very physically demanding for the horses and though we try and provide them with the best care possible, injuries are unavoidable. It is the nature of upper level competition.

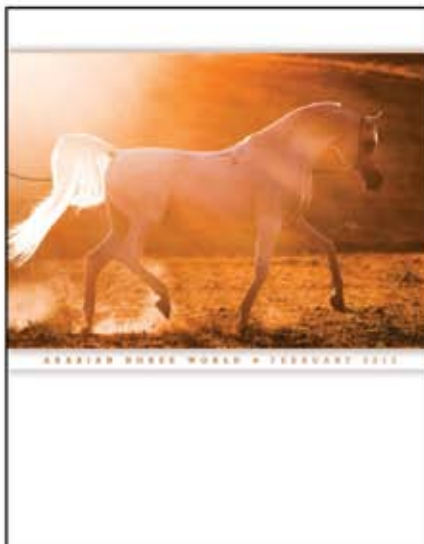
What are your plans and ambitions for the next five years?

I am currently taking a break from riding to focus on my studies. I took two years off before starting University so that I could qualify and prepare for the Games. It has been a very big change to go from spending all day at the barn to spending all day in class, but I am really enjoying Stanford.

I'd like to say thank you to my amazing support team and all the friends, family, and Thai fans who have cheered me on.

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60 SECONDS WITH IBRAHIM BISHARAT

COUNTRY: JORDAN
DATE OF BIRTH: FEBRUARY 22 1984
STAR SIGN: PISCES
PROFESSION: SHOW JUMPING RIDER



What is your greatest achievement?

Jumping the clear round in the Nations Cup round during the 2006 World Equestrian Games in Aachen, one of the 12 clear rounds from 120 riders and, of course, becoming an Olympian for the third time.

Who is your favourite athlete (rider or other sports person)?

Usain Bolt.

Do you keep any pets?

No.

What is your favourite movie?

Denzel Washington's 'Man on Fire'.

Who is your ideal celebrity (female or male)?

There are many ideal celebrities; it would be hard to choose.

What is your favourite gadget?

My iPhone.

What is your favourite music recording?

I have many favourite music recordings but one that comes to my mind at this moment is 'Feel the Love' by Rudimental.

After horses, what is your second favourite sport?

I have two: Go-Karting and Karate.



Do you like to cook?

Yes, when I have the time for it, which doesn't happen very often.

What is your strength and what is your weakness?

My strength is also my weakness and that is I'm very patient.

What makes you happy and what makes you sad?

Achievements make me happy, and when I have high hopes for something and it doesn't turn out to be like I hoped that makes me sad.

To your close friends & family, you are known to be...?

The best people to answer this question would be my family and friends but I think that I'm known to be supportive.

If you had the power to change something, what would you

change?

Making the world a peaceful and safer place to be.

Do you support any charitable organisations?

Unfortunately I don't formally support any "charitable organisations" but I always try on a personal level to help people around me who are in need of help. 🙏



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





DR. ABOUBAKR HASHEM HOME IS WHERE THE HORSES ARE

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

EGYPT HAS HAD LONG HISTORY IN SHOW JUMPING SPORT DATING BACK TO THE LATE 50s AND EARLY 60s. SADLY, THAT MOMENTUM HAS DIED DOWN OVER THE YEARS AND CURRENTLY, WHAT REMAINS OF THE COUNTRY'S GREAT EQUESTRIAN LEGACY ARE NUMEROUS TALENTED RIDERS AND BEHIND-THE-SCENES INDIVIDUALS OF THE OLDER GENERATION WHO CONTINUE TO WORK HARD TO BRING THE SPORT BACK TO ITS FORMER GLORY.



years. "It was a new challenge for my brother and I and we took it on with all heart. Omar retired from riding in 1989 due to back injuries which put extra responsibility on me where I fought and rode for myself and also for him", Dr. Aboubakr explains. Starting in 1987, Dr. Aboubakr represented Gezira equestrian team in the National League, winning many trophies. He competed in a few international competitions and was selected for the national Egyptian team in 1993.

He continues, "I was also a member of the first equestrian committee that was established in the Gezira Club in 1989. In its early years, this committee together with the late Dr. Hashem Fouad, former President of the Gezira Club, never spared any expense to provide equestrian facilities such as jumping grounds and horseboxes at the club, paving the way for many young riders to create a great team which engraved Dr. Hashem Fouad's name in the sport. I remained a committee member until 2002 when I was selected by the Egyptian Equestrian Federation's officials to join both technical and tournament committees where I remained for eight years. In 2004, I joined the FEI Judging course and passed the exams to become an International Candidate Judge. In 2009, I passed the second exam and I was then promoted to an

International FEI Judge in jumping. In 2010, fellow riders from Ferosia Club board asked me to join them one more time in the development of the Club. As such, we all adopted a plan to revitalise it and were capable of achieving plenty of developments through hard work, some of which included establishing state-of-the-art jumping grounds and vet clinics. In 2011, I nominated myself to become a board member of the Club where I got the highest number of votes. My colleagues and I have a clear vision for the Ferosia Club to play a sportive and social role for all its members, and our goal is to upgrade the club's performance to the highest levels in both fields."

Dr. Aboubakr says he has three homes: the first is where his family is, the second is the Ferosia Club and the third being Gezira Club. Why has he chosen equestrian sport to be so involved with and why does "his heart dwell where the horses are"? He answers, "I always loved all kinds of sports, but horse riding is related to my ancestors. Prophet Mohamed PBUH quotes, "In the forehead of horses are tied-up welfare and bliss until the day of resurrection." Also being a Hashemite descendant – an Arab clan known to have produced fursan [horsemen], played a big role; it is like horses are simply instilled in our blood. Being around horses has also helped me understand

One of those individuals, Dr. Aboubakr Hashem, has been involved in the horse scene in Egypt for many years. Along with his twin brother Dr. Omar, they started to ride in 1977 at the Ferosia Club under the supervision of Captain Ibrahim Abdullah. The twins started to compete for the Club's team from the time they were eleven years old and continued until age 18. Due to their remarkable performance, by 1987, Gezira Club asked the twins to establish a show jumping team for the club. With the support of visionaries, such as the late Dr. Hashem Fouad and Gen. Ahmed Adnan, Dr. Aboubakr and Dr. Omar were able to establish a team that Dr. Aboubakr headed for many



life; it taught me patience, wisdom, courage, and perseverance. As such, I perceive horse riding as a “way of life”.

Dr. Aboubakr is a father of nine-year-old Ali, who has just started riding, and a full-time dentist. How does he balance between that and being fully involved with horses? He states, “The resemblance between dentistry and equestrian sport lies in the fact that both need a lot of patience, accuracy, dedication and commitment.” He continues, “And as mentioned, I come from a family that loves horses, and I incidentally come from a family of medical doctors; medicine is part of my family’s tradition. My father was a Gynaecologist and my grandfather was the Chairman of the Pathology department in Cairo University. I work at my dental office and I am also an assistant lecturer at the Dental School. It is definitely difficult trying to balance between being a teacher, a doctor, a board member as well as taking care of my family, but I believe that God has always helped me to succeed.”

Given the setbacks in the Egyptian horse scene, how does Dr. Aboubakr see the sport developing in the next five years? He responds, “Well, we always keep trying to put the Ferosia Club on the map by keeping it developed. In 2010 the President of the IOC Jacques Rogge was present at the Club during our hosting of a show jumping event honouring the 100th anniversary of the Egyptian Olympic Committee, and just this year back in April, we hosted another international show jumping Festival, HORSES & HOPES. Consequently, and as slow as it may seem, we are trying our best to move in the right direction of the continuous development of equestrian sport in Egypt. I have two equestrian dreams that I wish to see come true for Egypt: firstly, I dream that we win another team gold medal in the Mediterranean Games. We won that 25 years ago and it is about time we win it again! It is a regional Championship and a must-win. And secondly, a dream which will require plenty of logistics, I dream that junior Egyptian riders are given the chance

to train and turn professional in Europe and gain much experience in preparation for the Olympic Games [2016]. I salute the Saudi Team for winning a medal in London 2012 for the plan that was in place for them prior to the Olympics was solely established just for that. They came ahead of many top teams and deservedly won that medal because they followed a plan, and again, because I believe that horses are part of Arab heritage, it’s in our blood and breed. Finally, with feeling, Dr. Aboubakr concludes, “for the time being, our role, my generation and I, is to bring back our horse legacy to Egypt.”

About Dr. Aboubakr: B.D.S Dental & Oral Surgery – M.D.S Dental & Oral Surgery (Fixed Prosthodontics) - Former show jumper (1987 – 1999) - Former member, Egyptian Equestrian Federation Technical Committee - Former member, Gezira Club Equestrian Committee (1989 -2002) – Board member, Ferosia Club - International FEI Judge



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Gathering the various equestrian sport, product and breeding interests




from various parts of the world, EQUIST has become the global face of the Turkish equestrian industry. The most important and established brands in the horse and equestrian industry entered markets of Turkey, the Middle East and Central Asia. At the same time, the new and emerging brands of these markets also had opportunity to present themselves. Thanks to EQUIST, a significant number of business cooperation and representation agreements were arranged.

It is worth noting that the Turkish economy is one of the largest and fastest growing economies. In the last quarter of 2011, Turkish economy has grown an impressive 5.2%, its agriculture has grown 6.2% and this growth has been recognised throughout the world. It is the same situation in the equestrian industry. Just 7 years ago, the equestrian sector had a value of 1 billion TL; today it has 2.7 billion TL value.

These days, around 15,000 horses are maintained in the professional horse riding and racing sectors. In

those sectors, 5,000 horses race and 4,000 foals are kept, and an estimated 5,000 pregnant mares and 500 stallions exist. Although references vary there are an estimated 17,000 thoroughbreds and 14,000 Arabian horses.

About 30,000 people are employed in the care, sheltering, training, feeding and transportation of these Arab and British origin horses as well as in the racing industry. While the number of bookmakers is around 2,500, there are horse races in seven cities, all year round. Estimations of around 300,000 people earn their living in Turkey through occupations related with horses.

Looking forward to this second major gathering, a great number of exhibitors coming from outside of Turkey have already booked their tickets for Istanbul. And the newly developing horse breeding industry of Turkey is preparing itself for a new world. Supporting the success of its exhibitors, EQUIST promises an important business venue for equestrian trade potential in 2013. 



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FOR HORSES & THEIR RIDERS WITH HORSE HEAL™ (PART 2)

By 'Lady' Colleen Heller CHt, TCM, LMt, MH



**A LIFE WITH RISKS
MEANS... FEELING
THE WIND COURSING
THROUGH YOUR
HAIR WHILE RIDING
BAREBACK ON A
HORSE AT 11 YEARS
OF AGE...WITHOUT
PARENTAL CONSENT!
LCH**

BIG RED, MARE, NEW JERSEY, USA:

When I was 11, one of my fond memories as a child was with a large red mare, unsurprisingly named Big Red, who stayed in a field behind where I lived. She was 8. Being that young I thought, "Well, I am older, so I can ride her." Unfortunately, the

owner did not agree at all. Every day after school I would go to see Big Red, feed her green grass I pulled from the area, always chatting to her. She knew my "sound" for her and would always come to me.

One day her owner finally gave in and allowed me to come ride her. He asked if my parents knew, I said "YES", but I lied. My parents would never let me on this horse. In fact, I was told early on to stay away from her. Ah well, both my parents worked so I decided to ride.

When the owner tossed me over the mare's back, I felt like I had the world in my hands while I gripped her mane. The owner patted her a bit from behind and she moved into the field. We were off quickly. I had no idea what to do! Good thing she did. I will never forget that afternoon with the sun low in the sky, hair flying in the wind, my face close to her neck, our colouring matched. Heaven!

ZUES, THE STALLION:

Zues, Stallion, Ferosia Stables, Cairo, Egypt

It was much warmer where Zues is kept than where No Limits' box is. The contrast is obvious. I noted this fact. Mr. Assem offered this information about his stallion; "Zues has a left hind issue which he was being treated for. He was very docile for a stallion. No character on display. Mostly, the hind area was the concern'. This time I felt no need to take the stallion out of the box to see or understand him. I went directly into the box with the groom asking the owner to remain out of sight.

Zues was not impressed by my arrival to his box, in fact, he basically ignored me. Once I put my hand on his neck he rose up to full height but did not flinch.

Unlike No Limits, there was no crowd

to watch me work this time. With her everyone was waiting for her to kick me, bite me, rear up or kick her box walls. With Zues, no excitement was expected at all. This was the case as well. Although warm feelings were stirring in me, it did not occur to me until much later why. My memories of Big Red came flowing in after several sessions with Zues whose colouring was similar to Big Red.

When I felt the chest and neck of the stallion it seemed pretty direct. All points along the meridians of the horse opened easily under slight pressure. Moving towards the belly there was slight movement from Zues. Still he was basically not involved in what I was doing for him.

Towards the flank area, he decided to get a look at what I was doing. This was the first time he was involved. What I noticed immediately was the heat coming from this area. He was too hot here. Using Chinese Meridian pointing and Reiki, I worked this area slowly as to not create more heat, but to release what I considered too much heat. Zues settled back; he was peaceful, not like he was before. His photograph shows the hazy look horses get when they are serene, photograph left. I continued to work Accu-Pressure Point Reiki down his leg.

On his right side, I started the same procedure as on his left side. Neck, chest, front legs to hooves, belly, back, croup, all opening easily until I arrived at the flank or hind area. Here I felt a block not unlike his left side. Zues was no help at this point; he was completely at ease and possibly asleep! When I brought my hands under the area of block his skin bulged and showed quite obviously where I should move next, photograph right. He was involved. Without hesitation I went to the area and started opening the points in a circular pattern. A few minutes later, the block was released.

When I spoke of the heat to Mr. Assam and his vet, they nodded to

me. Apparently they were giving Zues Iodine shots for the injured area. What does iodine produce? Heat. I asked if they would hold off on the shots and instead cool the area. Zues did not need the heat. He needed to cool to heal. Muscle injuries often are worked with a hot/cold formula depending on the length of time since the injury occurred but in this case the heat was stopping the complete healing. His being ridden gave him enough heat and the coolness after would give him the recovery he needed now. They said they would try it.

The vet was amused but not impressed but I liked him because we are so different in techniques and he was open-minded to hear what I was saying at least. It's a start.

When I came back to Zues he was doing much better. I did not feel any blocks and spent a little time on his flanks as I had before. This is normal. His rides were better and his general attitude seemed to change to Mr. Assam. "He has grown a character", said Assam "I'm relating to Zues more". He was happy and Zues jumped extremely well after. Everyone, including the old hard-to-please groom, was happy with the results.

RIDER, FARIDA EL KATTAN:

Female, Ferosia Stables, Cairo, Egypt

Farida came to meet with me about her fears relating to her equestrian life in general. Her main issue was thinking she would always be "thrown" from her mounts. She had quite a few stories on the subject and felt this would only continue.

First, I met with Farida's mother, a very interesting woman with very distinct thoughts and ideas on equestrian life. I found her knowledgeable and ready to help her daughter succeed. The open

mindfulness between them, along with Mr. Assam's enthusiasm towards my work, allowed me the privilege to work with such a wonderful young lady.

The most important agenda for any rider is their relationship with their mount. Not a relationship where you whip the horse into submission, but the one where the horse would give you all it has for you to just come and be within breathing space of it. Fear is not essential to training a horse and a nightmare to use for training a rider. Farida's fears were well set when we met.

She came to the S.E.E.D. Clinic for her first of 10 sessions. Through various techniques we used on this first visit, Farida started to change. We built trust immediately. This is crucial for energetic workings. Using the words that had stopped her from succeeding would turn her performance around, but not all at once.

Her first show after 4 sessions had her thrown again. Embarrassed and angry, she was not willing to ever ride again! We walked and talked. We went over her feelings and old unnecessary fear habits. Her next jump would be the next day. I promised her she would not fail because she now showed the last needed change, bravery. Fearlessness, determination, drive and bravery gave her what she needed. The next day she did not get thrown.

Farida has changed as a rider. She is enthusiastic, creative, determined, forthright, kind and has a relationship with her horses other riders might learn from. This combination spells 'winner'. This is her new year. I am looking forward to watching her grow. 🌱

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DEVELOPING YOUR RIDING SKILLS

By Khaled Assem

A RIDER WILL FEEL MORE AT EASE IN THE SADDLE ONCE HIS BASICS ARE STRONG AND INTACT, A SUPPLE AND CORRECT CENTRE OF GRAVITY LEADING TO A SUPPLE BALANCED RIDER, A GOOD POSITION WILL DRIVE MORE EFFECTIVENESS BECAUSE THE RIDER WILL COORDINATE HIS LEG AND REIN AIDS INDEPENDENTLY AND EVENLY.

AS THE RIDER DEVELOPS HIS FEEL FOR THE MOVEMENT OF THE HORSE AND HIS STATE OF MIND, HIS RIDING SKILLS WILL DEVELOP PROGRESSIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY.

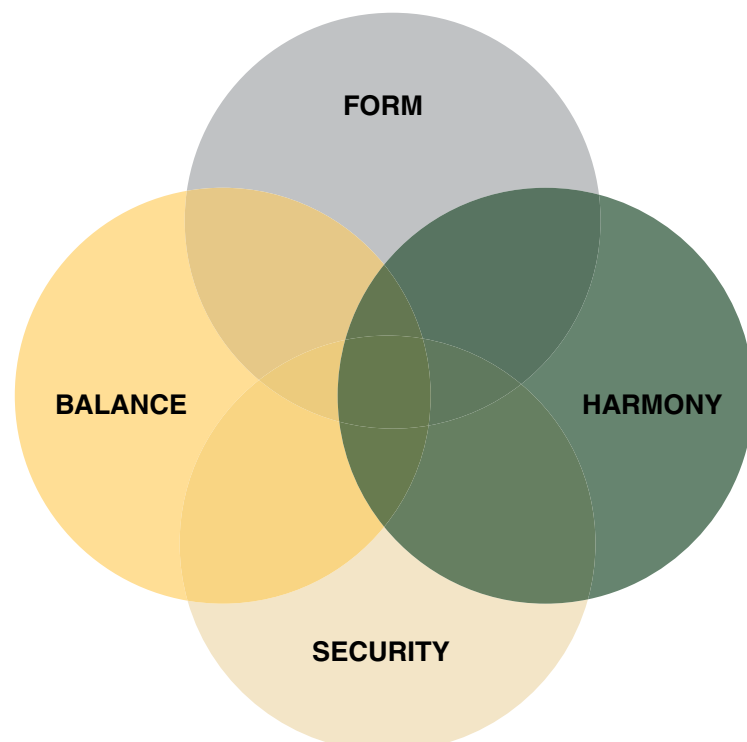
ACHIEVING A GOOD POSITION:

Maintaining balance: A balanced position allows you to ride without gripping tightly or using great strength. It also leaves your legs and arms free to signal effectively to the horse. As the stirrup leathers are shortened for jumping and cross country, your weight will be concentrated more through the legs.



Staying secure: Good balance and harmony, combined with keeping your lower leg in a consistent position, will aid your security in the saddle. It takes well-toned muscles

to hold a good position for long periods, so building your strength and stamina will help you to remain secure as well as keep an even rein contact.



Keeping a good shape: Form refers to the shape of the rider's position – the body, legs, arms, hands, and fingers. Every activity requires a slightly different form, but a neutral alignment of the spine is essential for all. This allows greater control and ease of movement as well as efficient breathing.

Moving with the horse: You must be in harmony with your horse if he is to respond to your aids without his movement being restricted. Your legs should go with the movement of the horse's sides, your seat with the horse's back, and your hands with the horse's mouth. This takes physical flexibility and supple joints.

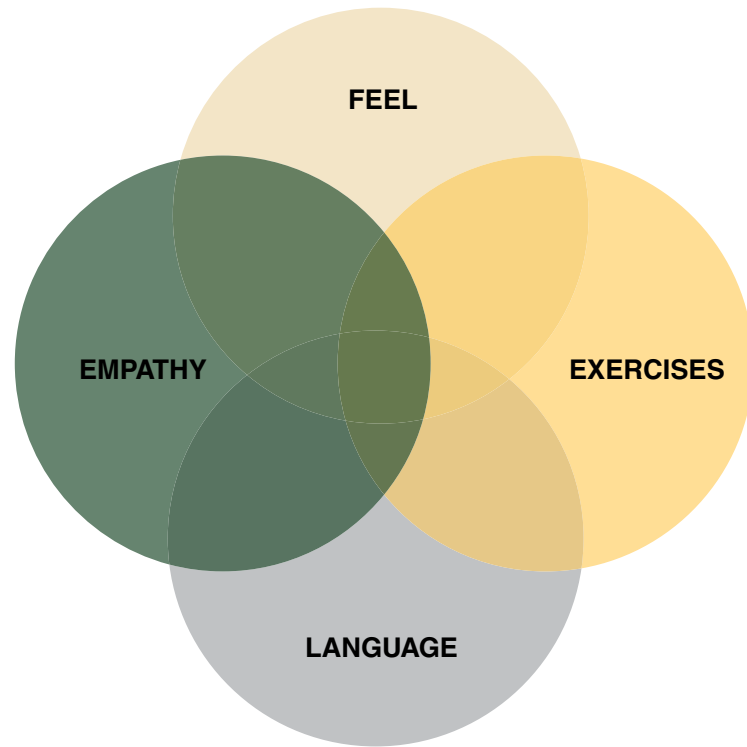
BECOMING MORE EFFECTIVE:

Understanding your horse: Empathy means being in tune with your horse so that he will perform with confidence and ease. Try to see your surroundings from your horse's perspective, and be aware of his state of mind so you can anticipate his reactions. A sound working knowledge of equine psychology and physiology is necessary if maximum progress is to be made.

Good communication: To communicate with your horse you use the voice, legs, and hands, as well as your weight. This language can invite, encourage, persuade, or at times, demand that the horse does any of a multitude of exercises, according to his abilities and the courage of both horse and rider. Gradual refinement of his language will improve your partnership with your horse.

Being aware of your horse's movement: To do the right thing at the right time, you need to be able to physically feel what the horse is doing so that you can move in harmony with him. Practical experience gained from riding different horses and doing different activities will help you develop feel.

Doing exercises: As you progress, you will do an increasing range of exercises in training and competition. At each level, an understanding



of the purpose and relationship of these exercises, including their advantages and disadvantages, is essential if you are to achieve your full riding potential while developing your horse humanely.

At this stage, effectiveness becomes a major factor that the rider has to incorporate in his plan.


PHYSICAL EFFECTIVENESS:

As the rider develops he gains better feel of the movement, speed and balance of his horse. He is able to identify the strengths and deficiencies of his horse and accordingly he could choose the more suitable and complimenting type of exercise. The rider could incorporate exercises to elongate the pace, develop transitions, add more agility through various forms of gymnastics, create more precision with straightness and bends and eventually grow more in tune with his horse and his own abilities and skills.

MENTAL EFFECTIVENESS:

Riding is like a complete picture that needs more feel to it and this is successfully attained when

the rider has an open mind to details. Successful riding needs as much positive mental attitude as everything else, it needs self control and discipline to achieve your goals and get the most of your horse.

Being mentally ready and able is about identifying your goals and creating short and long term plans, accessing situations well and being flexible to change. Yet it's mostly about setting a routine and working on polishing and refining it every day. It is about being observant, compassionate and able to cope with imperfections. Mental effectiveness is in itself a plan, not just for riding but for life in general reflected through riding. 

*Reference:
Complete Horse Riding Manual*

*About the author:
Khaled Assem is a certified Level 2 FEI trainer. He has been training for 15 years, competing internationally for 10 years and locally for 25 years.*



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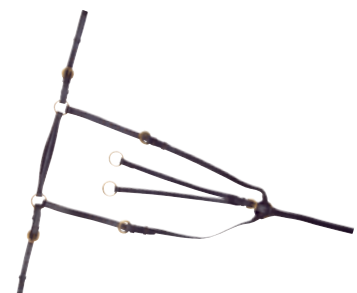
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INVESTIGATING POOR PERFORMANCE WITH FIELD EXERCISE TESTING

By Dr. Emir M. Chaher, Portugal



Figure 1: Endurance riding

EVOLUTION HAS MADE HORSES EXCEPTIONAL ATHLETES, SURVIVING THANKS TO SPEED IN ORDER TO ESCAPE PREDATORS, AND ENDURANCE IN ORDER TO COVER GREAT DISTANCES SEARCHING FOR GRASS AND WATER. HUMAN SELECTION HAS BROUGHT THESE CHARACTERISTICS TO EXTREME LEVELS.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF AN EXTRAORDINARY ATHLETE:

The superior performance of horses is mainly based on their exceptional maximal aerobic capacity (maximum amount of oxygen that the body can utilise during exercise), remarkable high muscle mass with large energy stores, the ability to increase the blood's capacity to transport oxygen when needed, their efficient gait and body temperature regulation.

The respiratory system is ultimately considered the limiting factor to high intensity exercise in horses. Horses can only breathe through their nose and the upper airways of horses are long and narrow increasing the resistance to airflow. Also the respiratory rate during canter and gallop is mechanically coupled to stride frequency so that a horse can

only take one breath with every step.

More than half of a horse's body weight consists of muscle in contrast to only 30 to 40% of most mammals (including us) and during exercise almost 80% of the blood pumped by the heart goes to the musculature.

Skeletal muscle is made up of bundles of individual muscle fibres. In general they are classified under two main types: slow twitch muscle fibres and fast twitch muscle fibres.

Equine muscles contain a genetically determined combination of both slow and fast fibre types as a result of breed selection for each specific use.

Slow twitch fibres are more efficient for continuous, extended muscle contractions over a prolonged time and they can go for a long time before they fatigue. Fast twitch fibres are much better at generating short bursts of strength or speed. However, they fatigue more quickly.

An Arab endurance horse has a higher percentage of slow twitch fibres to allow him to run very long distances (Figure 1) while a Thoroughbred or Warmblood horse has more fast twitch fibres required for sprint or to jump obstacles.

Training can positively or negatively change the composition of the equine muscles, however a common mistake is to constantly train show jumping horses with mechanical exercisers or treadmills developing endurance but losing in consequence the power needed to jump.

Horses have a very large spleen that stores up to one-half of the horse's total oxygen-carrying red blood cells. This gives horses the ability to naturally "dope themselves" when exercise induces the spleen to contract raising red blood cell concentration in the

circulatory system and dramatically increasing blood's capacity to transport oxygen to the musculature.

The heat generated by an exercising horse can increase its body temperature by 3 to 5°C. This heat dissipation is achieved by evaporation of sweat, evaporation of respiratory tract secretions and transfer of heat in air moving over the horse's skin and respiratory surfaces. This mechanism is less efficient in hot and humid environments increasing risk of heat shock.

FIELD EXERCISE TESTING:

Veterinary field exercise testing is a very useful tool to assess fitness and health during competition season, develop a training strategy or investigate the causes of decreased performance. This is best made with the horse exercising in regular working condition or simulating competition situations.

Because of their simplicity, the most used and useful parameters evaluated in the field are heart rate, speed and blood lactate level.

Heart rate is usually expressed relative to a steady submaximal speed, such as V200, the velocity at which the horse's heart beats 200 times per minute. This speed ranges from 500 to 900 meters per second (30 to 54 kilometres per hour).

Specially developed equine heart rate monitors with GPS function allow real time measurement and record of the horse's heart rate and speed for later analysis. (Figure 2)

Training progress is correlated with an increase in V200. Overtraining, unfitness, lameness (pain), excessive weight and cardio-respiratory diseases decrease the V200.

Lactate is produced in the muscles during intense power exercise when oxygen supply is insufficient (anaerobic metabolism). A concentration above 4 mmol/l of lactate in blood is considered an indicator of a horse passing from aerobic to anaerobic exercise. Blood is obtained from the jugular vein immediately after exercise and lactate is measured using a test strip system (Figure 3) delivering results immediately.

Lactate measurement after submaximal speed exercise is a useful method to distinguish poor and good performers, detect cardio-respiratory and muscular diseases and to monitor the changes in fitness throughout training programmes.

Standardised field exercise tests consist of at least 3 consecutive incremental steps of intense canter or gallop with short stops for recovery and blood collection.

POOR PERFORMANCE INVESTIGATION:

Reaching the full expression of a horse's potential requires a balance between nutrition, environment, training and veterinary check-ups to help in the prevention of illness and injuries.

Regular blood testing is a simple and efficient way to monitor a horse's health status, discover early signs of fatigue and evaluate recovery. A low red blood cell count (anaemia) indicates a decrease in the oxygen transport capacity of the blood, overtraining can cause reduced white blood cell counts (leucopenia), some blood enzymes like creatine kinase (CK), lactate dehydrogenase, (LDH) and Aspartate transaminase (AST) are markers of muscle damage and serum total protein level is a good general index of hydration, nutrition and general condition.

Interpretation of this information together with results of the field exercise tests may help veterinarians detect subclinical diseases or overtraining.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM:

The heart of an equine athlete can weigh almost 10 kilograms and pump up to 1,5 litres of blood with every heartbeat flooding the circulatory system with over 300 litres of blood every minute during maximal exercise.

Cardiac arrhythmias can be easily missed if the exam is performed only at rest because they usually occur only during exercise. Modern telemetric exercise ECG systems can record the electrical activity of the heart and transmit it throughout a training session. Atrial fibrillation is the most common arrhythmia associated with reduced performance.



Figure 2 : Equine heart rate monitor



Figure 3 : Lactate strip test

Athletic and older horses tend to have a high prevalence of cardiac murmurs, however many of them are considered physiological or "innocent" heart murmurs with no clinical implications. Doppler echocardiography helps to establish a definitive diagnostic and prognosis.

Respiratory problems are described as being a main cause of exercise intolerance and poor performance in sport horses.

UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT:

Some disorders reduce the diameter of the upper airways causing a dramatic increase in turbulence and resistance to airflow. According to Poiseuille's law, when the radius of the windpipe is halved, the resistance increases by 16-fold!

The two best-known problems of the throat, because of the distinctive



Figure 4: Epistaxis

noises they produce, are laryngeal hemiplegia (inspiratory roaring) and dorsal displacement of the soft palate (expiratory gurgling). Surgical intervention is the treatment of choice for these conditions.

Riders should also be conscious that excessive head flexion (rollkur) is now also recognised as a cause of significant upper respiratory tract resistance.

Flexible endoscopy is the diagnostic method of choice for upper airways tract disorders.

LOWER RESPIRATORY TRACT:

Recurrent airway obstruction (RAO), inflammatory airway disease (IAD) and exercise induced pulmonary haemorrhage (EIPH) are the leading lower respiratory tract disorders responsible for poor performance.

RAO also known as 'heaves' is a chronic and recurrent condition similar to asthma in people. It affects more frequently older horses housed in stables with moulds, poor ventilation, dusty bedding and fed with hay.

IAD is disease seen more commonly in young athletic horses associated with cough, increased respiratory secretions and exercise intolerance. Environmental dust is a major cause in conjunction with many other factors (viruses, allergens and management). Cytology of the fluid obtained by

endoscopic tracheal wash (TW) or bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) or "lung wash" aids to establish a final diagnostic.

The improvement of the environment in the most important step for the management of these two conditions. Aerosol therapy with bronchodilators and glucocorticoids also help alleviate airway constriction and inflammation.

Even though EIPH is a very common disease in racehorses, only 5% of horses affected show blood coming from the nose or 'epistaxis' after exercise (Figure 4). Therefore, diagnostic is based in endoscopic airway examination or by evidence of blood in fluid obtained by TW or BAL.

Bleeding is a consequence of the rupture of pulmonary capillaries causing inflammation and pulmonary fibrosis and therefore reducing performance. Diuretics (Furosemide) are commonly used to prevent EIPH by reducing pulmonary vascular pressure although its efficacy is controversial.

MUSCULAR DISORDERS:


Recurrent exertional rhabdomyolysis (RER), often called 'tying-up', is a condition seen more frequently in Polo and Thoroughbred young mares with a nervous temperament. It is a potentially life-threatening condition characterised by post-exercise gait stiffness, muscle pain, sweating, muscle cramping and fasciculation. Horses undergoing an

episode of RER should not be moved to avoid further muscular damage.

Overfeeding with grain is pointed as a main cause of RER.

Treatment is based on fluid therapy, vasodilators (Acepromazine) and prevention through dietary management and supplementation with vitamin E and selenium.

Understanding unique equine physiological attributes, the specific disorders that affect them and how they relate to each other, is mandatory to efficiently manage and train a horse during his competitive sports career.

This is best accomplished when horse owners, riders, trainers and veterinarians agree that *"at all times the welfare of the horse must be paramount"* honouring the FEI's Code of Conduct. 

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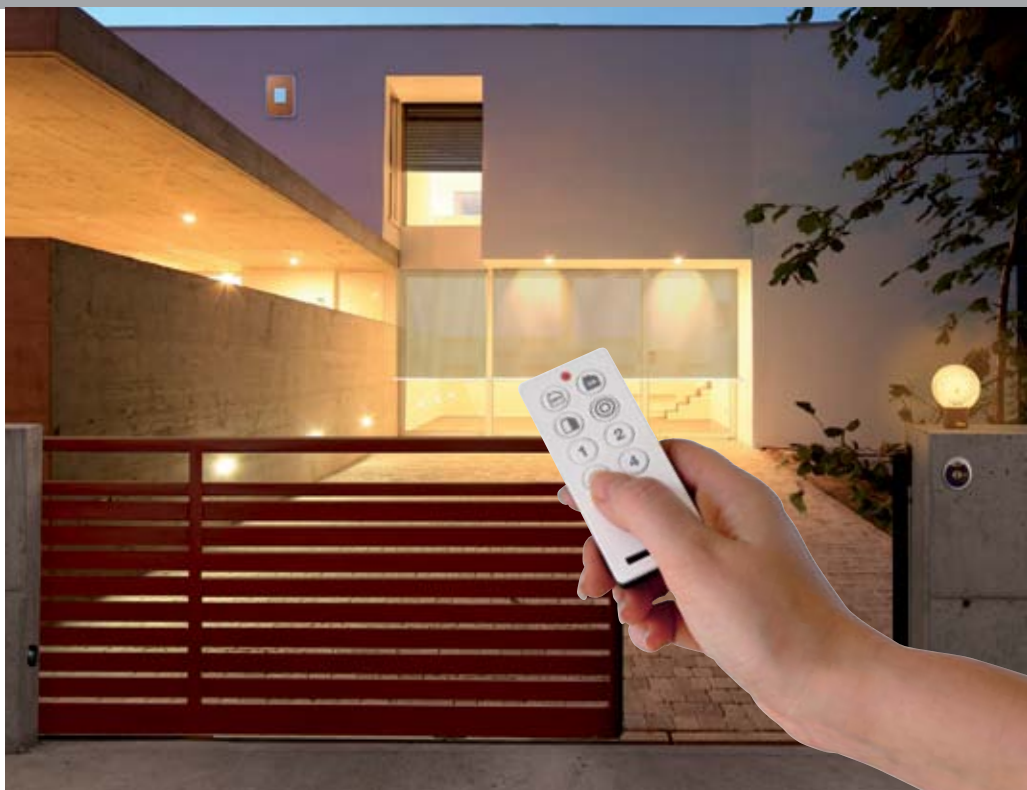
Home Automation



Barriers



Rolling shutters



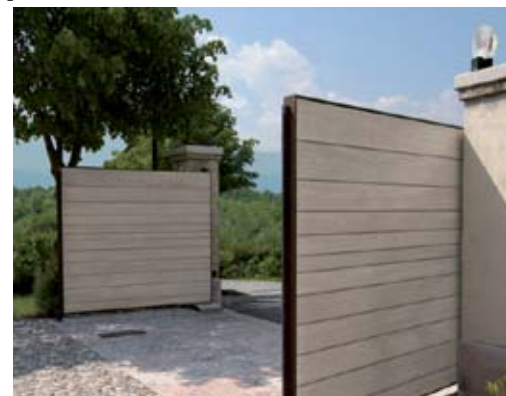
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