

ARAB LEAGUE

By Sinan Nashashibi

“ For the second consecutive year the Arab League (AL) kicks on in the fabulous Kings Ranch in Alexandria, Egypt. More than 220 horses and 120 international Arab riders plus a few Europeans (2 Dutch & 1 Italian) gathered for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd rounds of the Arab League Qualifier (ALQ) which was held in the same location, Kings Ranch from the 19th of November till the 12th of December. ”

The 3 shows, with each lasting 3 days, consisted of 3 tours:

1. **The Big Tour** which consisted of the 1st three ALQ for the 2005/06 season & the last ALQ was also considered as the qualifying round for **Aachen World Equestrian Games (WEG) 2006 M1.40-160.**
2. **The Medium Tour M1.25-1.35.**
3. **The Small Tour M1.20-1.30.**

The event was professionally organised by the Egyptian Equestrian Federation and Kings Ranch which has up-to-date jumping facilities (2 main sand rings, 2 main grass rings & over 250 boxes). Arab riders gathered from 10 countries, including 5 Olympic riders to take part in the event which was held under the direct supervision of the FEI.



Eng. Abdelfattah Ragab
President of the E.E.F.



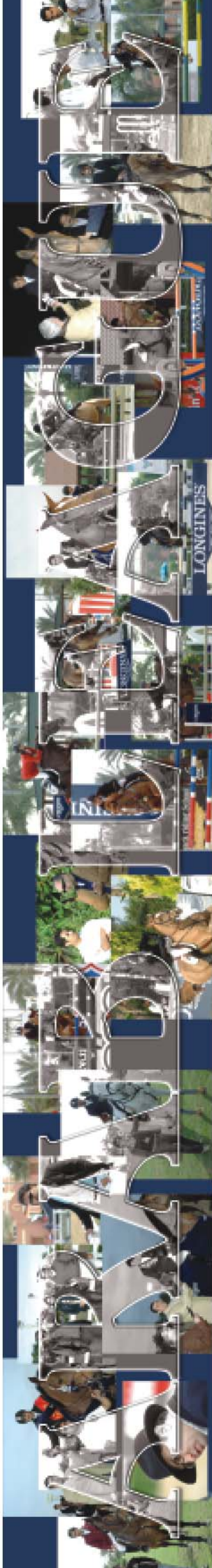
Hady Gabr, Egypt



Molly & Horreya



Karim Hamdy, Egypt



EGYPT

The courses were built by Werner Deck, **German** for the 1st show, Lucian Somer, **Belgian** for the 2nd show & Rob Yansen for the **Netherlands** for the 3rd show.

The 1st show Grand Prix and ALQ was won by the **Egyptian** rider Mohamed El Bouraie on the Dutch mare Nirvana, Johan Heins horse and successfully 2nd place was won by **HRH** Prince Abdullah from **Saudi Arabia** on the Gelding Theker Allah by Libero H. 3rd place went to Sydney bronze individual medalist Khalid Eid on the SF gelding Al Reyad.

The 2nd show had almost the same names in the ALQ line up which was won by Khalid Eid on the SF gelding Al Reyad who captured the full 20 points to be added to his 16 points of his 1st ALQ round, to come in 2nd in the standings.

2nd place also went to the **Egyptian** rider Mohamed El Bouraie on the Dutch mare Nirvana X Johan Heins horse to lead up the league standing in 37 points. **Jordanian** Olympic rider of 21 years of age Ibrahim Bisharat was 6th on his BWP gelding Quinto by Latano whom he competed with in both the Athens Olympics and the Las Vegas World Cup Final 2005 as the 2nd qualified rider for the ALQ 2004/05 season.

As the show went on **The Medium Tour**, Mini Grand Prix in the 2nd show was won by the **Egyptian** rider Karim El Zoughby on the Dutch mare Leanie by Good Times. Karim has been based in Holland since 1998 and is already competing in top



Sameh Eldahan, Egypt



HRH Prince Badr bin Hamad



Aghyad Kabbany, Syria



Mohamed El Bouraie & Medhat Ragheb (Longines Agent)

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international levels in Europe as well as having taken part in **Jerez WEG 2002**, plus recently winning the **Mediterranean Games individual bronze medal** on the same mare **Leanie**. The 2nd Mini Grand Prix was won by **Saudi** Olympic rider **Ramzi Al Duhami** who also won **The Big Tour Joker** class at that same day on SF Fall Khmer Athens Olympics mount.

Small Tour classes wins were equally won between **Saudi** and **Egyptian** riders while the line up places were won by the improving riders of **Qatar**, **Jordan**, **Syria** and **Lebanon**.

Attendance consisted of many Arab show jumping lovers from all parts of the Arab world as well as many European professional spectators. The Arab

Equestrian Federation and Kings Ranch management worked very hard for the shows and now, as the ALQ is becoming very competitive, senior and professional Arab riders are no longer heading to compete abroad. What's more is the development of real interest in breeding warm bloods due to the need to provide large numbers of warm bloods for the future to compete. And as the show jumping sport is becoming more popular, an extra demand on warm bloods will arise soon.

The Arab League is yearly improving in all aspects especially the standard of riders, horses, and show organisation, as well as the availability of more than 2 locations for the final. Organising a World Cup Final in one of the Arab countries will also be considered by the FEI.



KSA team member



Mohamed Nafea



Abdallah, Faisal and Fahad, KSA



Ms. Ghassan Kassar, Jordan



Khaled Eid, KSA



Ahmed Talaat, course designer



Karim El Zoghby, Egypt



Fady Zabibi, Syria



Faisal, Ramzi and Kamal, KSA



Qatari team member



Abdallah, Fahad and Ramzi, KSA



Mohamed El Bouraie, Egypt

DUBAI

Al Maktoum Memorial Challenge-Dubai 2006

By Sinan Nashashibi



Mohamed El Bouraie

Under the patronage of **HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein**, **Al Maktoum Memorial Challenge** took place in Dubai, the financial capital of the UAE. From the 11th till the 13th of January 2006 a world class show was held up to the best organisational standards which consisted of 2 main categories: the **Arab League (AL)** and **The Invitational 5 Stars**. The show also included a full demonstration of the 7 FEI Disciplines with the demonstration done by current and previous World & Olympic Champions including the legend Mark Tod.

Al Maktoum Memorial Challenge has been considered by equestrian experts and officials as one of the best shows ever, not only in terms of the prize money amounts, but as a whole. According to **HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein** the honorary president of the show, Al Maktoum Memorial Challenge will be an annual event for at least the 5 coming years. The show included the best 20 riders in the **FEI/Gandini** jumping riders world ranking list, all of whom were fully invited to compete in **The Invitational 5 Stars** classes. 10 wild cards were distributed to sport legends such as John

Whitaker from **Great Britain**, Ian Millar from **Canada** plus 5 **Arab** riders (Miss Rasha Hareb from **UAE**, Ibrahim Bisharat from **Jordan**, Khaled Eid, Ramzi Al Duhami and Kamal Bo Hamdan from the **KSA**). Arab riders were carefully selected to take part in **The Invitational 5 Stars** classes according to their reputable history of **Jumping Olympic Games**, **WEG** and **World Cup Finals**.

The Arab League section consisted of 2 classes per day including the Arab League Qualifier in the final day which witnessed the on-going challenge between the AL point's leader Khaled Eid from the **KSA** and the **Egyptian** super talent Mohamed El Bouraie. As the Arab riders had a greatly close and unique chance to watch the top 20 riders in the world competing, they were doing their best in the ring to reflect the huge improvement of the sport in the Arab world in front of the world's best officials, riders, trainers, owners and horse lovers.

The AL **Big Tour** classes were dominated by the **Egyptian** Mohamed El Bouraie on the 10 year old KWPN mare Nirvana X Glenn Ridge - Johan Heins. Mohamed El Bouraie and Nirvana X remarkably won the 3 **Big Tour** classes in the AL section, an achievement which rarely happens in the show jumping world.

The Grand Prix and ALQ were made up of 2 rounds having 8 riders qualified to the jump off, 5 of whom won with a clean slate (2 from **Egypt**, 1 from **UAE**, 1 from **Lebanon** and 1 from the **KSA**). Only splits of seconds were between the 1st and 4th places with a neck to chase by the Sydney individual bronze medalist Khaled Eid on Lucky Star and Mohamed El Bouraie on Nirvana X who went last and re-proved their ability to be in the **Kuala Lumpur World Cup Final**. 3rd place went to Dutch based Karim El Zougby and Leane from **Egypt** while 4th place went to the experienced **UAE** rider Abdullah Hameed on Quatro H who started his 1st ALQ appearance this season at Al Maktoum Memorial Challenge.

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The **Small Tour** classes in the AL section were dominated by the **KSA** riders: Khaled Eid and the experienced Olympic Ramzi Al Duhami with their future young talented horses Spring G and Luna Rosa. A great achievement was made by **UAE** speed specialist Mohamed Al Kumaeiti with the Guidam offspring, the 12 year old stallion AL Bareq, in winning the final day speed stakes.

The **Invitational 5 Stars** classes over fences up to M1.60 height witnessed female domination by the **Irish** German-based leading lady rider Jessica Chesney Kurten winning both the Master class with Lebertina X Libero H and the rich Al Maktoum Memorial Challenge Grand Prix with Quibell the offspring of the great Quidam de Ravel. The world number 1 Marcus Ehning from **Germany** demonstrated his unique style by coming 2nd in both the Grand Prix with Gitania and the Masters class with Nobal Savage H.

The **Dubai Classics** were won by the great Nick Skelton from **Great Britain** on one of the best horses in the world at the moment: Arko X Argentinus. The crowd also noticed the efforts made by the **German** world number 20 Alloys Pollman Shwekhorst in placing 1st in **The Palm Speed** class on Diamond Daylight and equally first to the best 6 bar specialists Nick Skelton and Russel.

Arab riders' appearances in **The Invitational 5 Stars** classes was positively reflected by the trio Rasha Hareb from the **UAE**, Ibrahim Bisharat from **Jordan** and Khaled Eid from the **KSA**. Jordanian Athens Olympic rider 21 year old Ibrahim Bisharat secured a place in Aachen WEG 2006 through having 8 faults at the Al Maktoum Memorial Challenge Grand Prix.



Khaled Eid, leading the ALQ for the World Cup Final



Alaa Maysara, Egypt



Mohamed El Bouraie

He qualified on the 12 year old BWP gelding Quinto X Latano, his mount in both the Athens Olympic and the Las Vegas World Cup Final 2005.

Arab world favourite Khaled Eid and his mount the 12 year old SF gelding Al Reyad made a tremendous clear round at Al Maktoum Memorial Challenge Grand Prix and went straight to the jump off in which, unluckily, he had 8 faults with the 3rd fastest time of 38.65 to come 9th. Overall this result guaranteed him a start in Aachen WEG 2006.

All riders enjoyed jumping the nicely designed and built fences by Olaf Petersen and Bob Ellis. Most fences symbolized the culture and land marks of Dubai and Arab heritage.

Having an extraordinary show like Al Maktoum Memorial Challenge in the Arab region will boost our sport to the maximum and will produce more Arab world class riders and sponsors.