

“BRINGING UP A CHAMPION” SERIES

YOUSSEF GALAL
&
SHERIHAN ELGHAMRY

ONE MUST ALWAYS WONDER ABOUT THE JOURNEY OF BRINGING UP AN EQUESTRIAN CHAMPION; HIS LIFESTYLE AND THE ROLE OF HIS FAMILY IN SUCH SUCCESS. HORSE TIMES MAGAZINE DECIDED TO WORK ON A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS THAT EXPLORE THE VALUE OF HORSEMANSHIP, AS WELL AS HOW FAMILY BONDS CAN LEAD TO FURTHER SUCCESS THAT ENDS WITH INTRODUCING A HERO TO THE EQUESTRIAN WORLD.

THIS MEETING IS WITH A BEAUTIFUL FAMILY; A MOTHER OF 4 NAMED SHERIHAN ELGHAMRY , AND HER TALENTED PROMISING SON YOUSSEF GALAL.





TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF?

My name is Sherihan El-Ghamry. I am 40 years old, a mother of four, 2 boys and 2 girls. I used to live in Saudi-Arabia with my husband, and I worked there as a KG teacher. But now I'm back in Egypt and I chose not to work to spend enough time with my children.

WHY WAS "HORSE RIDING" YOUR SPORT OF CHOICE FOR YOUSSEF?

Actually, he did! I was always pushing him to play a sport such as basketball or swimming but, he always avoided that and never enjoyed these sports.

Until he came across the place designated

for equestrian games, and kept watching it for hours without getting bored, so he asked to join the equestrian training.

At the time, I had no information about horse-riding, even though I did not know that it had tournaments and training, but as a result of his persistence and determination, I complied with his request and we began our journey together in this sport and from here this became our daily break, visiting horses and equestrian training; it became our home that we start and end the day with.

HOW DID RIDING CHANGE YOUSSEF'S PERSONALITY?

Youssef was a very shy child who refused to play with other children, afraid of strangers, and

not a team player at all. When he started riding, I noticed that he began to talk to his trainers and fellow riders too.

Now, Youssef has changed 180 degrees, he tends to socialize more, express himself and his opinions, loves his friends so much and even attends tournaments to encourage them.

SOME ACCIDENTS HAPPEN TO RIDERS, DID THAT EVER FRIGHTEN YOU?

I didn't know that the game was that dangerous, until I started watching him improve his level and his falls from the horses increase by the way.

Every time he falls, it frightens me so much, but

I do not convey my fear to him, I do not show it to him, this fear is inside me, because I do not want to raise him as a person who easily gets intimidated.

HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SEE YOUSSEF'S RIDING IMPROVE DAY BY DAY?

I feel so happy, even though we face many challenges, but also his father, my husband supports us very well, so with every improvement I am very happy because I see the return for our efforts.

In addition, I have a goal for each of my children to pursue, so any step towards this goal makes me very happy.



TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE CHALLENGES YOU FACED.

This sport is concerned with two things, the player and the horse, not like other sports in which the interest is limited to the player only. This makes the boy take responsibility as there is another creature he is responsible of and he has a duty to take care of him.

I definitely have moments of frustration, anger and a sense of failure, especially in the beginning; we did not have the ability to buy a horse for Youssef, so we resorted to allocating or renting horses.

In the policy of renting horses, the horse always has a problem, so we take him and work hard on him in order to solve this problem, and when horse has improved and we start to step forward with him, the owner of the horse comes to retrieve it to sell it because he initially rented it for the purpose of selling it.

But Youssef was always very patient with that and never got upset like me, and he was always satisfied and confident that god will compensate him with something better than what he lost.

WHAT'S THE HAPPIEST MOMENT RELATED TO YOUSSEF YOU REMEMBER?

There are many moments of happiness between me and Youssef, the time when he first started competing, I used to videotape him and once he finished his routine he would come running to me to watch his performance together and see what we failed in and what we did well.

And yet, every time he shares his interests with me, it's been one of the happiest moments of my life.

In Horse-riding, every time I hear *"Youssef Galal came in the first place so far"* I come into tears.

DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOUSSEF IN INTERNATIONAL SHOWS?

Sure, it's his dream and we won't give up until we reach the Olympics.

WHAT DO YOU WISH FOR HIM?

My wish for Youssef is that he never suffers from emptiness or deficiency in any aspect of his life, succeeds in everything he does, be a productive person and has an imprint in society, be a lovable and happy person.

HT MEETS WITH

SEIF ABBAS
&
FATHER
ESSAM ABBAS

“BEING A FATHER FOR SUCH A SPECIAL, TALENTED CHAMPION LIKE SEIF, MAKES ME VERY HAPPY AND PROUD. I THINK SEIF IS ONE OF THE RIDERS WHO PUTS A LOT OF EFFORT FOR THE SAKE OF THE GAME”





TELL US MORE ABOUT YOURSELF. YOU ARE A FATHER OF A BIG EQUESTRIAN CHAMPION; HOW DOES THIS FEEL?

I am Essam Abbas, I was an equestrian rider at Alexandria sporting club, but I had to stop when I became a prosecutor and now, I am a Court Counsellor.

I am a very proud father, Seif works hard to stay in the top sport, he feels obligated to be

on top of his game all the time, he doesn't just seek perfection as a rider but he is so keen to see this sport moving forward as well, I always try to support him as much as I can because he really deserves the best.

DO YOU HAVE ANY RIDERS IN THE FAMILY?

Yes, we are 3 brothers, and all of us are riders. I can definitely say it's a family sport.

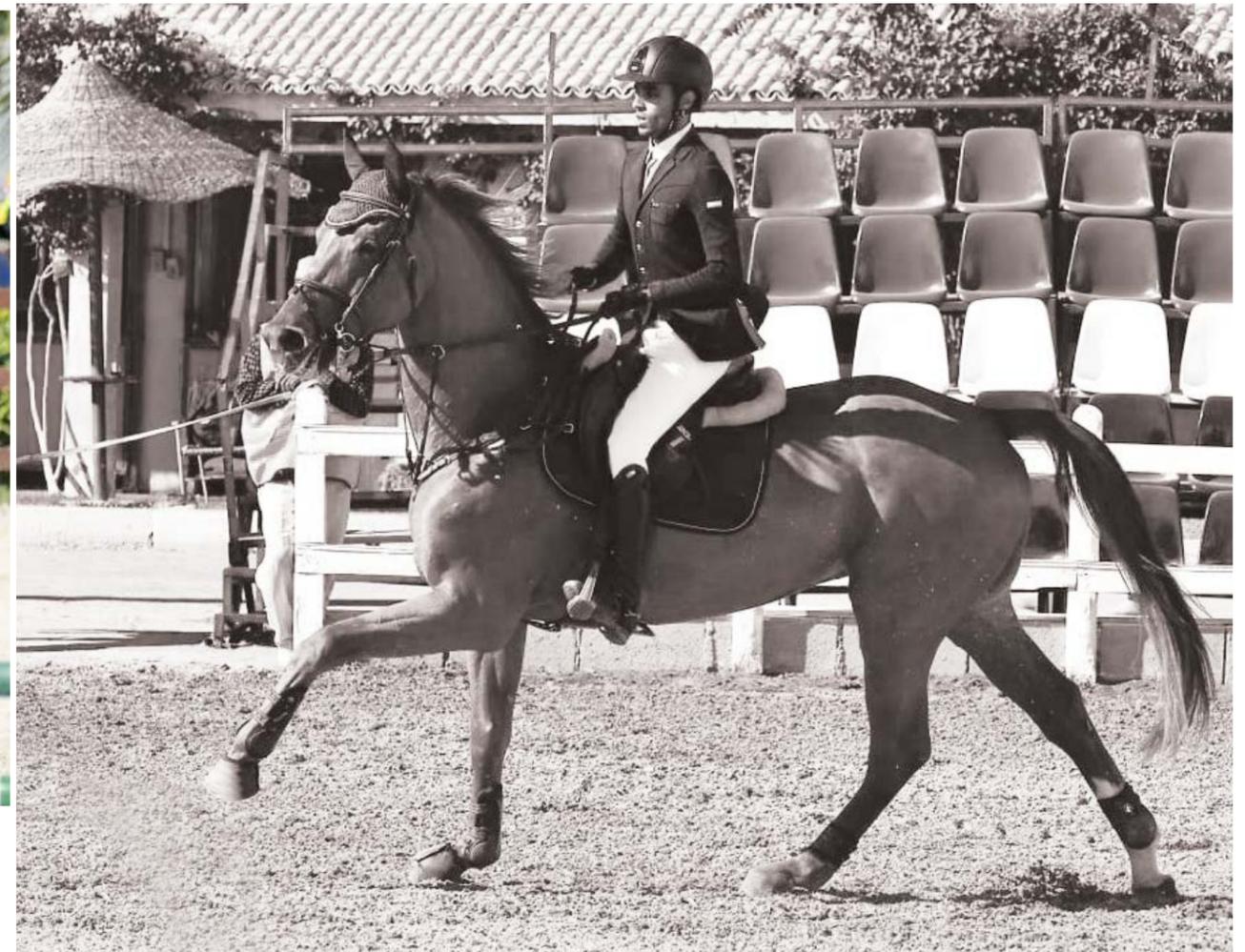
WHEN AND HOW DID SEIF'S JOURNEY START WITH HORSE RIDING?

I used to take Seif with me to my trainings when he was still a baby. The first time he touched a horse he was 6 or seven months, then I tried to test his interest in horse-riding when he was 8 years old. I was so keen to let him travel abroad and learn a lot about the sport from an international pererspective, in order to gradually

become well-educated in everything related to horse-riding. Till now, Seif trains regularly with prominent riders like Alan Waldman and Abd Elkader Saeed every year to improve his performance.

HOW DID HORSE-RIDING CHANGE SEIF'S PERSONALITY?

Seif has become more independent and has learnt to make decisions; as horse riding always



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obliges you to take a decision in a second. A rider has to be a quick thinker and has to take the right decision, because you are dealing with a very intelligent creature who has his own personality as well.

MANY ACCIDENTS HAPPEN TO HORSE RIDERS, HAS THIS EVER AFFECTED YOUR SUPPORT TO THIS SPORT?

Unfortunately, the equestrian sport has its risks, I had 3 accidents before while riding, and sure Seif had many accidents till now but that didn't

urge us to give up or leave what we love.

WHAT'S THE HAPPIEST MOMENT RELATED TO SEIF THAT YOU REMEMBER?

When I saw him for the first time riding my horse Roshe Noir, he was very young at that time, and then he competed with him and won.

A MOMENT YOU FELT SO PROUD OF SEIF.

When he was competing in Germany with his team. With more than 30 teams in competition, he had a clear round and entered the jump-off

and won the class.

WHAT DO YOU THINK WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING PERIOD IN SEIF'S LIFE AND HOW DID HE COME OVER IT?

I believe it was that time when he had more than six well-trained horses, and we sold two of them, and then the other three died in less than a year. He only had one injured horse left and he trained it a lot, till he eventually had very successful results with him. It was a very difficult period because these horses were dear

to him and they were some of his best horses.

WHAT'S THE PIECE OF ADVICE THAT YOU ALWAYS GIVE TO SEIF?

Never stop learning. Whatever level you reach, you have to always be updated with every new technique, with every style, and always seek to become better.

WHAT DO YOU WISH FOR HIM?

To always be well and happy, and to make great steps in his path until he rocks.