

IN-DEPTH WITH

ZEIN SHADY

By Horse Times Team

ZEIN SHADY, A RISING STAR IN THE WORLD OF SHOW JUMPING, RECENTLY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO REPRESENT EGYPT AT THE PRESTIGIOUS FEI WORLD CUP FINALS. IN THIS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW, ZEIN SHARES HIS EXPERIENCES, EMOTIONS, AND INSIGHTS FROM HIS JOURNEY TO THE WORLD CUP FINALS. FROM THE THRILL OF QUALIFYING TO THE CHALLENGES OF PREPARING HIS HORSE, LONDON EYE, ZEIN'S STORY OFFERS A GLIMPSE INTO THE DEDICATION AND RESILIENCE REQUIRED TO SUCCEED IN THIS DYNAMIC SPORT





up and doing vet checks left me speechless. To calm myself down, I went to the stable, listened to music, and revised my plan multiple times. I was focused and ready to give my best performance.

HOW DO YOU MENTALLY PREPARE YOURSELF TO PERFORM AT YOUR BEST AND HANDLE THE PRESSURE? DID YOU HAVE A MENTAL COACH?

Currently, I don't have a mental coach, but I have considered the idea and I'm planning to have one in the future. To mentally prepare myself, I watch videos to calm down and motivate myself. I also talk to my father before the show to help me relax and reduce stress. It's important for me to stay focused and positive to perform at my best.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP OR THE BOND WITH YOUR HORSE, LONDON EYE?

London Eye is the best horse I have ever ridden. We got him in September 2022, and initially, he was my father's horse. At the time, I had two mares. We started training him when he was eight years old, and he made his first show appearance in August 2023 in Sentower. After that, my father rode him in Morocco, and eventually, he gave the horse to me when I didn't have a main horse. As I started training him, I felt a unique bond between us. He's a big-hearted, gentle, and playful horse.

TAKING HIM TO THE WORLD CUP FINALS, DID YOU HAVE ANY WORRIES ABOUT HIM?

Yes, I had concerns about London Eye because he had just recovered from a significant injury that required 40 stitches. Fortunately, it was only in the tissue, not affecting his muscles or joints. With only six weeks to train him and bring him back to top form, the pressure was on.

COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT THE TEAM THAT SUPPORTS YOU AND HOW THEY CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR SUCCESS?

Show jumping is a team effort, and I have been fortunate to have the support of my family, friends, horses, and grooms throughout my journey. They have believed in me, stood by my side during the challenging times, and supported me in reaching my goals. Their contributions have been invaluable to my success.

HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU FIRST KNEW THAT YOU ARE COMPETING AT THE FEI WORLD CUP FINALS AND REPRESENTING YOUR COUNTRY?

I was very excited and happy to have the chance to compete there. I was a little bit worried about being ready and if my horse would be in shape, but overall, it was a mix of excitement and anticipation. Representing my country at the World Cup Finals was a great honor and a proud moment for me.

THE FEI WORLD CUP FINALS ATTRACT TOP RIDERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD. HOW DID YOU FEEL BEING AROUND TOP RIDERS?

I was extremely excited to compete against so many international riders at the FEI World Cup Finals. On the first day, seeing everyone warming



THE FEI WORLD CUP FINALS ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR TOP-NOTCH ORGANIZATION. WHAT ASPECTS OF THE COMPETITION IMPRESSED YOU THE MOST?

The World Cup Final was an incredible experience. The show, the people, the venue, the arena, and the stables were all perfect. Everyone involved was extremely helpful and supportive. I didn't want the show to end; I enjoyed every moment of being there. I hope to have the opportunity to jump again in Riyadh at the same venue in the future.

HOW DID IT FEEL BEING THE YOUNGEST RIDER AT THE WORLD CUP?

It felt great. The first round was a good start for both me and my horse. Although I wished I could have performed better, I understand that the

experience gained is invaluable. Being among top riders and competing at such a prestigious event was a memorable and fulfilling experience.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON, AND WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS?

Currently, I am focused on getting my horse, London Eye, back in top form. I also have a few other horses that need development. I have recently moved to a new stable in Holland, which is an exciting new start for me. My current goals are to compete in the World Cup Finals in Basel next year and the 2026 World Equestrian Games. I also aspire to be part of the Egyptian team in the future.



DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE LEARNED ENOUGH FROM THE PAST?

At this point, I believe that learning never stops. Throughout my journey, I have learned a great deal from everyone I have met. I have gathered valuable knowledge and experiences from each person, and I have used them to create my own book of wisdom. I will continue to learn and grow in the future.

DO YOU ENJOY YOUR JOURNEY IN THE SPORT?

Absolutely! I enjoy every step of my journey. The challenging times are the ones that push me the

most. While there may not be many good days, I cherish them when they come. I have learned a lot along the way, and I will continue to learn and strive for better days.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO YOUR FATHER?

I can't thank my father enough for all the support and time he has dedicated to me. I started in the sport by watching him ride, traveling with him, and observing him compete. **He is the one who instilled my love for the sport. I am truly grateful for everything he has done for me.** 🙏