

By Gen. Samy Negm El Din

Kuwait

Qualifies National Showjumping Judges

The Kuwait Riding Center represented by Khalid Al Kharafi and Noal Al Essa took a very daring initiative to call for and organize - under the auspices of the Kuwaiti Equestrian Federation - the first seminar for qualifying national showjumping judges during the period 16th - 21st of April 2005.

When Al Essa, the General Manager of the Kuwait Riding Center, consulted the development and training department of the FEI (Fédération Equestre Internationale) they supported the choice of the Egyptian International Judge and Course Director General Samy Negm El Din (myself) to organize and give the Seminar in English.

Invitations were extended to the NFs of the Gulf area and to all the riding clubs of Kuwait to welcome their participants to the seminar.

The Kuwait Riding Club that hosted the seminar turned out to be heaven for horse lovers and riders with its fully equipped nicely ventilated stables, the training areas and arenas, its oval uniquely designed main jumping arena, the spectators stand and, above all, a very good jury box. All were constructed using the most up to date materials suitable for the purpose and the weather.

On the first day, after a nearly three hour flight from Cairo, I arrived at Kuwait airport accompanied by my wife and my assistant (Phew!) where we were received by

our extremely energetic and tireless hostess Al Essa. On the same day at 4:30 p.m., she introduced us to the 12 participants; ten beautiful ladies and two gentlemen who looked to me like a group of nice horse lovers, keen on knowing more information about our beloved sport. They, later on, proved to be the most demanding and interacting participants I had ever met during the last ten years in which I gave seminars in Egypt, Jordan, UAE, Lebanon, Oman and finally Kuwait.

Our daily program was to be picked up by Al Essa and go to the club where I prepared the handouts and logistics to get everything ready for the evening session.

The sessions of the seminar took place at the club premises at the outskirts of Kuwait City daily from 4:30 till 8:30 p.m. in a large room supplied with a data show and enough tables and seats for the 12 participants of the seminar. The snacks we had in the breaks were home-made by the participants and were irresistibly delicious.

The daily theoretical class sessions included nine computer presentations and a practical session; on the field training. Tests were done on the fourth day, including implementation of the given information of how the judge could perform the course inspection in cooperation with the course designer. All participants were given a copy of the course plan with all the necessary information. They were also invit-



Khalid Al Kharafi

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ed by the course designer Luc to inspect the Ten Faults Course, laid in the main arena.

On the final day, the participants were invited to take a written test to find out how much they had benefited from the four day sessions which, on most days, extended for more than was planned in order to tackle the non-stop questions of the extremely eager participants.

I spent the remaining day and a half going through the papers of both tests where I encountered the second pleasant surprise of this seminar; the answers exceeded my expectations by far. I had never thought that they would memorize that much of the detailed sessions, all 12 participants had grades over 70%, two exceeded 95% and the majority exceeded 85% as a total result.

On the evening of that day, the Kuwait Riding Center organized an open showjumping competition, in which all participants of the seminar took part in a rotating scheme either as judges or stewards. My role in this competition was guiding the attendants and answering their questions on how to handle the problems that occurred during the event.

By the end of the event, after the prize giving ceremony of the last class, Al Kharafi, Al Essa and myself presented the certificates to the 12 seminar participants.

Again, we were accompanied by Noaf Al Essa to the Airport, leaving Kuwait after my first visit and hopefully not the last. I very much admired the country, its people's hospitality and, most of all, the tremendous efforts of Al Essa in organizing this event.

Finally, I feel very optimistic that the Arab Equestrian Society is on the right path. ■



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▼ KRC stand





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