

SAMEH HATTAB

DOING THE RIGHT THING & LIVING WITH IT

By Khaled Assem





▲ Seif Al Sham, Syria 2008

SAMEH HATTAB IS ONE OF THE VERY SELECTED GENTLEMAN IN THE EQUESTRIAN FIELD THAT ONE COULD CALL "A TRUE HORSEMAN" WITH ALL THE NOBILITY, HONOUR, AND CHIVALRY UNDERSIDE THIS TITLE. MOREOVER, HE IS A GREAT JOCKEY WITH PLENTY OF MILEAGE UNDERNEATH HIS WINGS.

For the 2009 Mediterranean Equestrian Games, Sameh was selected to be one of the 4 team members representing Egypt except was not chosen to compete. The fact is, I wanted to unravel Sameh's true emotions on being very prepared and brisk for the games versus not being chosen to compete as I myself went through a similar experience. Whether that decision was technically justifiable, politically correct or even horse dependant as in Karim Habashi's case, (Karim's horse was lame), the truth is, we need to learn from our decisions. Regretfully for Sameh, he paid a price that he will always remember.

Sameh is a medical doctor and for some time he was out of the sport but managed

to compete on and off in several Arab League championships. He recently bought a new horse and was selected to be part of the Egyptian delegation. He says, "Butterscotch' is a very good horse and when I was training for the games, I was very satisfied with his performance". One would imagine that it could be difficult to coordinate between being a full time doctor, and continuing practicing a passion. "It's very difficult for me to ride or train everyday. I am a full time doctor and of course, that is very consuming. Sometimes I have to ride very early in the morning or very late at night, but I generally manage to practice 4 days a week".

Not just a rider and a doctor, but also a husband and a father! "As a husband...well! I also try my best to be a good husband and make time for home and as a father, my son is just 1 month old so I cant really tell you much now" he says!

Looking back at being part of the team off for the Games, Sameh felt he was a solid team member yet was not chosen to represent his country. He states, "Frankly, I felt that I really worked hard this season and given that my horse was in very good shape, I think I showed some excellent

results. My trainer, Henela Weinberg, was very happy after I put her advice into effect and I felt my horse was ready to win. I believed it. In all, I would think the decision of my not being chosen was the best choice at the time and the best for the country. Even though it was terribly disappointing, I would have had to respect that decision whether I liked it or not. The Egyptian team came in 4th place at the Games; this is a considerably good result, and my team members performed very well, however I still felt that I could have also shown good results."

As the son of the President of the Egyptian Federation, would one be motivated or discouraged? He says, "Truly? I do not think of it this way. My mind does not go on analysing that my father is the President of the EEF or a representation of a ruling body in the country. I think of him as my father, a person worthy of respect. It does not have the motivating or the discouraging effect on me. I do not usually do something or "not" do something due to my being the son of the President because people will always keep on talking. I try to stick to doing what is right whether they like it or not." **HT**