

SAUDI ARABIA'S AL DUHAMI

TAKES DOUBLE GOLD

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem & the FEI





▲ Al Duhami & the entourage at the prize ceremony

IT WAS DOUBLE GOLD FOR INDIVIDUAL CHAMPION RAMZY AL DUHAMI ON NOVEMBER 22ND AS SAUDI ARABIA IMPRESSIVELY DOMINATED THE JUMPING COMPETITIONS AT THE ASIAN GAMES IN GUANGZHOU, CHINA. ON MONDAY THE 38 YEAR OLD RIDER JOINED KHALID AL EID, HRH PRINCE ABDULLAH BIN MOTEB AL SAUD AND ABDULLAH AL SHARBATLY TO TAKE THE TEAM TITLE AHEAD OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES WHO PIPPED HONG KONG AND CHINA IN A THRILLING THIRD ROUND JUMP OFF AGAINST THE CLOCK.

AND FOR THE UAE THERE WAS ALSO A DOUBLE TO CELEBRATE AS SHEIKHA LATIFA AL MAKTOUM CLAIMED HER SECOND SILVER MEDAL OF THE GAMES WHEN FINISHING ONLY FRACTIONALLY BEHIND AL DUHAMI IN THE JUMP OFF FOR THE INDIVIDUAL TITLE. THE BRONZE WENT TO 2000 OLYMPIC BRONZE MEDALLIST AL EID WHO HAD TWO FENCES DOWN IN THE THREE HORSE DECIDER.

The equestrian competitions at the Asian Games were ground breaking as, for the first time in 60 years, horses were permitted to travel in and out of the Chinese mainland due to stringent new veterinary procedures. Previously horses could enter China, but would not be permitted to return to the international equine community due to fears of disease-spread.

The facilities provided by the Asian Games organisers were greatly appreciated by the equestrian competitors. Saudi Arabian coach Sami Al Duhami stated, "At first I had doubts about whether we should come to the Asian Games because the biggest challenge was how to get the horses to Guangzhou, but that turned out successfully. The facilities here are great and the horses are well taken care of - I think equestrian sport in Asia will grow from here" he added.

HORSE TIMES had the chance to interview Al Duhami in depth regarding the double win.

THE WIN:

I can obviously say that I was

overwhelmed with a feeling of satisfaction knowing that the culmination of my hard work, effort and support from the people around me resulted in my winning gold.

THE HORSE:

Bayard is a nine year old gelding by Kashmir. He was definitely the most inexperienced horse in the whole event and I have to say that he showed his future potential at the Games.

THE COURSE:

The most difficult part was when I saw my colleague Khalid Al Eid commit a two down and knowing that Sheikha Latifa was the last person to go. It got me thinking of a way in which I can make a faultless round without taking a lot of risks but fast enough to put pressure on the last rider.

CHALLENGES AND PRESSURE FACED DURING THE GAMES, AS AN INDIVIDUAL RIDER AND AS A RELIABLE TEAM MEMBER:

As an individual I faced less pressure

because eventually, I hold full responsibility and I am the only one accountable for my actions. Meanwhile the experience of my horse put me in a position where I had to think about every little detail that will ensure my winning rounds. In a team effort I found that there is more pressure because the whole team was depending on everyone's cumulative effort and you have a sense that you have to perform in order to not let everyone down.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE GAMES; TRAINER, TRAINING & HORSES:

We had the games in our sight for quite some time and we made sure to work progressively towards being fit and ready. Our team trainer Mr. Stanny Van Paecshen made a bespoke plan for every horse to maximise their performance. In regards to our training we trained daily with varying regimens but mostly it was participating in special shows that would fit our programme.

WEG VERSUS THE ASIAN GAMES:

From my experience I can't really compare the two as I found them equally challenging from very different perspectives. The levels of competition in both Games are very high but I found that the pressures of the Asian Games outweighed those of the WEG because of predetermined expectations for the Saudi team.

AL DUHAMI HAS REPRESENTED HIS COUNTRY FOR MANY YEARS THROUGH WHICH HE HAS LARGELY AND WITH GREAT EFFORT BUILT UP THEIR LIST OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN SHOW JUMPING. WE SEE HIM GOING ON TO WIN GOLD AT THE ASIAN GAMES WHICH IN NO WAY WILL STOP HIM FROM BELIEVING IN CONTINUITY; INSPIRATIONS TO ACHIEVE MORE:

I will put it for you in the simplest terms. The love of horses and the equestrian sport is my inspiration but without the support of King Abdullah, Prince Faisal bin Abdullah, Prince Turki bin Abdulla, and Prince Nawaf bin Faisal my continuity would not be achieved. So I will forever be indebted for their support and faith. 🇸🇦



▲ 9 year old Belgian Bayard has showed his future potential at the Asian Games as indicated by Al Duhami

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JUMPING TEAM COMPETITION RESULTS:

GOLD KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA 4 FAULTS:

VAYARD V DEVILLA T
(RAMZY AL DUHAMI) 0/0
PRESLEY BOY
(KHALID AL EID) 0/0
MOBILY A OBELIX
(HRH PRINCE ABDULLAH BIN MOTEB AL SAUD) 0/8
MELODIE ARDENTE
(ABDULLAH AL SHARBATLY) 0/4

SILVER UNITED ARAB EMIRATES 5 FAULTS IN JUMP OFF:

KALASKA DE SEMILY
(SHEIKHA LATIFA ALMAKTOUM) 3/0/4
CO-JACK
(SHEIKH MAJID AL QASIMI) 0/8/0
PICOBELLO WODIENA
(AHMED AL JUNAIBI) 0/4/WD
DUBAI'S PRIDE
(SHEIKH RASHID AL MAKTOUM) 0/4/1

BRONZE HONG KONG, CHINA 24 FAULTS IN JUMP OFF:

JC CAN DO
(MAN KIT CHENG) 0/0/WD
JC TILBURG
(PATRICK LAM) 4/1/4
JC CRUNSHIP
(SAMANTHA LAM) 17/4/16
CAPONE 22
(JACQUELINE LAI) 2/8/4

JUMPING INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION RESULTS:

GOLD: RAMZY AL DUHAMI RIDING BAYARD V DEVILLA, KSA, 0/0/0 48.52
SILVER: SHEIKHA LATIFA AL MAKTOUM RIDING KALASKA DE SMILY, UAE, 0/0/0 48.83
BRONZE: KHALID AL EID RIDING PRESLEY BOY, KSA, 0/0/8 47.50

FACTS AND FIGURES:

- 8 nations competed for the team honours - Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong China, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Korea, China, Japan and Chinese Taipei.
- There was a two way jump off, between the UAE and the team from Hong Kong to decide the silver medal after both teams completed the first two rounds with 11 faults.
- This was a back-to-back team victory for Saudi Arabia in the Asian Games.
- It was the first time in the history of the Asian Games for a team from Hong Kong to take a Jumping medal (bronze).
- Two horses jumped four clear rounds during the Jumping competitions at the Asian Games - individual champion Ramzy Al Duhami's Bayard V Devilla T and Sheikha Latifa Al Maktoum's Kalaska de Semily.
- Qatar's Mubarak Al Rumaihi riding Castiglione finished closest to the individual medal winners when finishing fourth, carrying just five faults.