



The Round Table

Being the official magazine of the Egyptian Equestrian Federation, we are keen to go behind details and discuss sensitive issues that are not topics for everyone in the field. By doing so, we aim to clarify facts and decrease the gap between involved parties. We have around our table of negotiation this issue; Eng. Abdel Fattah Ragab the president of the Egyptian Equestrian Federation and Mr. Gamal Amer the president of the Egyptian Riders Association. As we shed light on critical and conflicting issues, please read on.

Interview by Khaled Assem

Q1. The expansion and flourishing of the equestrian sport is one of the main targets of the Egyptian Equestrian Federation. In the same sense, that seems to be the same target of the Riders Association. Is there any conflict between the Federation and the Association in that role? And if not, How could both entities join hands in the better upbringing of the sport?

Eng. Abdel Fattah Ragab: I don't see any conflict between the Federation and the Association, because the way the Association is run presently under the presidency of my close friend Mr. Gamal Amer has paved way for better understanding between the Federation and the Association. Moreover, it has created an atmosphere of good will between the riders and the Federation. In fact, for this sport to flourish, there has to prevail a healthy relationship between all parties involved and that is what we have at the moment. Actually, Mr. Gamal Amer conducts all his communications with me personally in all the affairs regarding the sport.

Mr. Gamal Amer: The Federation is the official channel that puts forward the policy of the sport. The Association has a complimentary role and that is to convey the opinions and suggestions of the riders to the Federation through the very solid relationship currently present with the Federation. This relationship doesn't necessarily have to be absolutely official at all times rather more friendly and respectful by both sides.

Q2. A rider with a certain complaint, should he consult the Riders Association or the Riders Committee put together by the Federation?

Eng. Abdel Fattah Ragab: the respect and recognition for Mr. Gamal Amer by all the members of the sport including the riders has limited tremendously the activity of the Riders Committee which in fact, has to find an alternative goal rather than receiving complaints and resolving issues regarding the sport. I realize that Mr. Gamal Amer is doing such an efficient job. I am satisfied, I need nobody else on that subject. In fact, I suggest organizing a conference in the middle of the season with all the riders along with the Federation members to clarify and emphasize the policies and plans of the Federation as well as to answer any questions the riders might have.

Q3.The issue of a national trainer is one on every rider's mind. What is the policy of the Federation regarding that issue?

Eng. Abdel Fattah Ragab: *There is no denial that the Federation bears the responsibility of having that issue unresolved for the whole of Egypt. Especially, since the departure of Mr. Jean-Yves Camanen trainer of the national team and Jackie the trainer of the junior team who was living in Alexandria. I bear this responsibility in front of all the riders. Yet, I insist that there has to be training centers where the riders could go to. Those centers would produce trainers as well as help riders. The old idea of a trainer "on tour" travelling to various clubs is not valid anymore. I promise all the riders that within the next two years there will be a solid system satisfactory to all parties.*

Mr. Gamal Amer: *I suggest choosing some of the promising young elements and giving them courses locally and abroad in order to create new kaders with high technical capability to become future trainers.*

Q4.Will the rider be allowed to be a trainer at the same time?

Eng. Abdel Fattah Ragab: *Unfortunately, the past 40 years didn't produce any elements as trainers not even randomly and definitely not on technical basis. It is time to change, we can't follow the football rules from the administrative perspective. You know that the local federation have the authorization to provide and issue the guidelines that they see suitable for further development of the sport. During my presidency period, I see no problem in giving an equal chance for those who want to become trainers even if they are riders (with some considerations). For sure, we could revise the laws just like what we have done when we allowed riders to attend seminars for course designing and judging. We will also allow them to judge lower classes after finishing their riding.*

Q5.One of the vital elements for the expansion and flourishing of this sport is funding. How do you see the possibilities for that and how feasible is the idea of sponsorship?

Eng. Abdel Fattah Ragab: *The Federation has in mind to bring this sport closer to the public and the media and that is by holding the national shows at locations that would further attract the public such as resorts and hotels and not just public clubs. All the companies and business people who could consider the idea of sponsorship need to see some improvements to step in. I urge all those who have new ideas or who could organize events or add something new to the sport to come forward. The Federation will not ask for any financial return to start and we would be willing to give all the facilities and all the administrative backup.*

Mr. Gamal Amer: *I declare that Eng. Abdel Fattah Ragab has developed this sport further in various ways. I believe that going with our national shows out to be held in resorts and hotels will take the sport into another level. I also congratulate Eng. Abdel Fattah Ragab for opening a new corner stone which is his equestrian center "King's Ranch".*

Eng. Abdel Fattah Ragab: *In conclusion, I would like to thank "Horse Times" magazine for discussing those issues and ideas and I would like to thank Mr. Gamal Amer my friend and colleague for all his efforts which I believe have had a most profound effect in bringing back this unity to the equestrian family. Finally, I would like to indicate that until the fourth tournament of the season, the competition is so fierce and the standards have gone higher, we still have no leading rider in any of the A class events. This situation has had no precedent before.*

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