Egypt’s Strategy for the Development of the Game of Squash

Hany Hamouda
Vice-President Egyptian Squash Federation
First Step:

- We have 11 Official Clubs that are funded by the government and 11 private clubs. Each has its own academy for the squash with over a 150 kids of less than 11 years old enrolled in one academy. So this establishes a strong base for the kids under 11 years with over 3000 boys and girls in that age group.

- And luckily for those kids our top professional players are distributed among the different clubs so they get to watch them play everyday and see how hard they train and learn a lot from them and get motivated.
Another new idea that was proposed by the President of the Egyptian Squash Federation - Mr. Assem Khalifa - is to set up 3 carnivals or festivals annually to discover new talents by organizing competition matches for the kids and committee of highly qualified coaches and top players evaluate these kids and the winners get nice prizes like squash rackets & balls.
Second Step:

- The Egyptian league is an important tool for the development of the game where the result of each club is a combined score of the results of all age groups. So the kids get the perfect chance to watch and support their team mates of top PSA/WSA players and the other way round. I believe this gives them a huge confidence boost.
Third step:

- The camps; and here I’d like to thank India, Kuwait, Qatar, Czech Republic, Malaysia, Saudi and USA for sending over either individual players or their national teams to train in Egypt, which is a very good step forward for Egyptian squash by which the players get to be exposed to different schools of squash.

- Also organizing friendly matches between members of these teams and players from different clubs as well as the Egyptian national team players. This has contributed a lot of development of the game in Egypt and believe me when I say that without getting that kind of exposure, Egypt would’ve not been able to dominate the world of squash like it is today.
Fourth Step:

- The clubs and players’ contracts

- All clubs participating in the Egyptian league offer annual contracts to its top players as well as the young players who have got potential, either in the form cash money or other incentive such as airline tickets to participate in international tournaments either on the juniors level or the senior/professional level where competition is at its best and players would absolutely benefit from such experiences that would eventually help develop their game. So the competition among the players in order to make it on the team and sign the contacts is guide essential and has positive impacts on the overall level of squash in Egypt.
The Federation sponsors its top players whether PSA or WSA players as well as the junior players and offers them several airline tickets throughout the year to participate in international tournaments in order to improve their world rankings. It is also keen on organizing several PSA and WSA events every year for those who can’t afford travel expenses and these tournaments attract so many international top players, they love to come to Egypt and we consider the tournaments to be huge festivals where the outcome is always positive not only for our players but for the coaches, referees and organizers as well. Not to mention the benefits of such events and their impact on spreading the game in our country given that it is considered the 2nd most popular game in Egypt after Football.
The Ministry of Sport:

- It is considered the backbone and the biggest supporter of Squash in Egypt. The Egyptian Federation over the past 4 years received Funds from the Ministry with over 16 million Egyptian pounds (About 3 million US Dollars).
And finally for the fans of the Egyptian Squash:

- The uniqueness of the Egyptian Squash has attracted so many elite foreigners to contribute to its further development.

- Sheikh Ziad El Torky offered his sponsorship to our champion Ramy Ashour and to Amir Wagih’s Academy for Squash which produced lots of champions from different countries.