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WELCOME TO THE 2017 AJ BELL WORLD SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS

On behalf of The Professional Squash Association, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all - fans, players, coaches, referees, volunteers, sponsors and distinguished guests - to Manchester for the 2017 AJ Bell PSA World Championships for what promises to be an exciting week of world class sporting action.

The PSA World Championship is the single most significant tournament in the annual squash calendar. It is a title that transcends squash and allows our champions to be recognised alongside, and on a level playing field, with the greats of all sport - to be World Champion is to be amongst the greats not just of squash, but of sport.

To that extent, we are delighted not only that this year's tournament will see both the men's and women's events played out simultaneously for the first time since 2011, but that this year, thanks to the superb support and backing of England Squash, Manchester City Council, AJ Bell and UK Sport, equal prize money will be paid to both the men's and women's competitors for the first time in the championships' history.

Throughout the course of the next ten days, the athleticism and competitiveness of both sexes will be on full display inside the beautiful glass courts both at the National Squash Centre and at Manchester Central, offering squash an opportunity to showcase all its wonderful qualities to a new audience.

I, for one, cannot wait to see how the week unfolds and I wish all the competitors the very best of luck and hope that all fans in attendance enjoy what promises to be an enthralling week.

Enjoy the squash



Alex Gough
PSA CEO

We are delighted to welcome you to Manchester for the 2017 AJ Bell PSA Men's and Women's World Championships 2017.

AJ Bell's association with top-level squash began in 2013 with the Men's AJ Bell PSA World Championships in Manchester. From 2014 to 2016 we sponsored the AJ Bell British Squash Grand Prix, and in 2017 we put our name to the AJ Bell European Individual Closed Squash Championships in Nottingham. To finish the year in style, we are once again proud to be supporting the most prestigious tournament on the squash calendar.

This event will see players from more than 30 nations descend on Manchester to compete in what will be the first World Championships ever to offer equal prize money for men and women - a milestone that we are delighted to be associated with.

At AJ Bell we want to help more people enjoy secure, healthy, happy lives up to a ripe old age. We can assist with the money side of things by making the whole investment process more straightforward. And by supporting high profile sporting events, teams and athletes, we can help to raise awareness of the positive impact that sport can have on a person's physical and mental wellbeing.

This tournament will showcase all that is great about sport; the athleticism, the professionalism, the sportsmanship and the respect and engagement between athletes and fans.

We hope that you enjoy the action and excitement on offer in Manchester.



Billy Mackay
Marketing Director,
AJ Bell

It is fantastic to welcome the AJ Bell PSA World Squash Championships back to Manchester after the city successfully hosted the event in 2013. UK Sport is proud to use National Lottery funding to help bring the biggest and best sporting events to the UK, which boosts the local economy, supports homegrown talent and gives fans the chance to see the best in the world compete first hand.

By hosting world-class sporting events like this World Championships, we can inspire the nation. Squash is a dynamic, accessible and global sport, in which we have enjoyed huge success with players such as Nick Matthew and Laura Massaro already inspiring the next generation of stars.

This Championships marks a key moment for the sport with equal prize money being awarded across both the men's and women's competition for the first time; UK Sport is pleased to have played its part to ensure that this commitment became a reality.

On behalf of UK Sport, I congratulate England Squash, Manchester City Council and the PSA on delivering an excellent event, and hope you enjoy yourself as the world's best athletes compete to be crowned champion.



Liz Nicholl
Chief Executive, UK Sport

We are delighted to extend a warm welcome to all the players, coaches and spectators from around the world attending the 2017 AJ Bell PSA World Championships.

It is an honour to host the Men's and Women's Championships concurrently in Manchester for the first time at the National Squash Centre, home of the Commonwealth Games in 2002, and Manchester Central.

This year marks the first time in its history that men and women will compete on level terms with a record \$325,000 prize money on offer in both draws. We are extremely proud that the 2017 AJ Bell PSA World Championships is going to provide another showcase for equality in sport.

Once again, we are delighted to have the support of AJ Bell along with our sponsors Dunlop and Salming.

Our sincere thanks go to our partners UK Sport, Manchester City Council and the Professional Squash Association in bringing the Championships to fruition.

We'd also like to thank our volunteers, referees and coaches who work tirelessly throughout to deliver a world-class event.

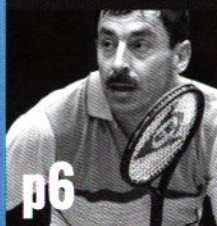
It promises to be a spectacular event, with 200 of the world's finest athletes representing more than 30 nations battling it out for the coveted titles. We would like to wish everyone competing the best of luck.

Best wishes for a successful and enjoyable stay in Manchester.



Keir Worth
Chief Executive Officer -
England Squash

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MORE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ON YOUR DOORSTEP



Women's Hockey World Cup
21 July – 5 August 2018 – LONDON

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12–18 AUGUST 2018 – LIVERPOOL

Taekwondo World Championships
15–19 MAY 2019 – MANCHESTER

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Rugby League World Cup
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THE BEGINNINGS - WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

“The sport needed a statement - and staging the first World Open was that statement.”

Following on the coat-tails of the one-man driving force that was the legendary Jonah Barrington, a man who almost single-handedly dragged squash from the strictly elitist public school corridors to the consciousness of the mainstream during the 1970s, squash took a major leap towards fulfilling its potential as a professional sport between February 3-9, 1976 - when the first ever World Open (later renamed the PSA World Championship) was staged in London, England.

Won by legendary Australian hard-man Geoff Hunt, who prevailed over top seed Mohibullah Khan of Pakistan in the final of a tournament which saw 41 of the 64 main draw places filled by overseas players, that inaugural World Championship laid the foundations for the transformation that squash underwent during the subsequent 40 years.

For Barrington, who was instrumental in the development of that first World Open, there was disappointment on the day as his on court performances failed to deliver the success he was accustomed to, but there was also huge pride in what had been achieved by what was still at that point a fledgling International Squash Players Association (ISPA) - the forerunner to the Professional Squash Association.

“I think the World Open, taking place at that time,

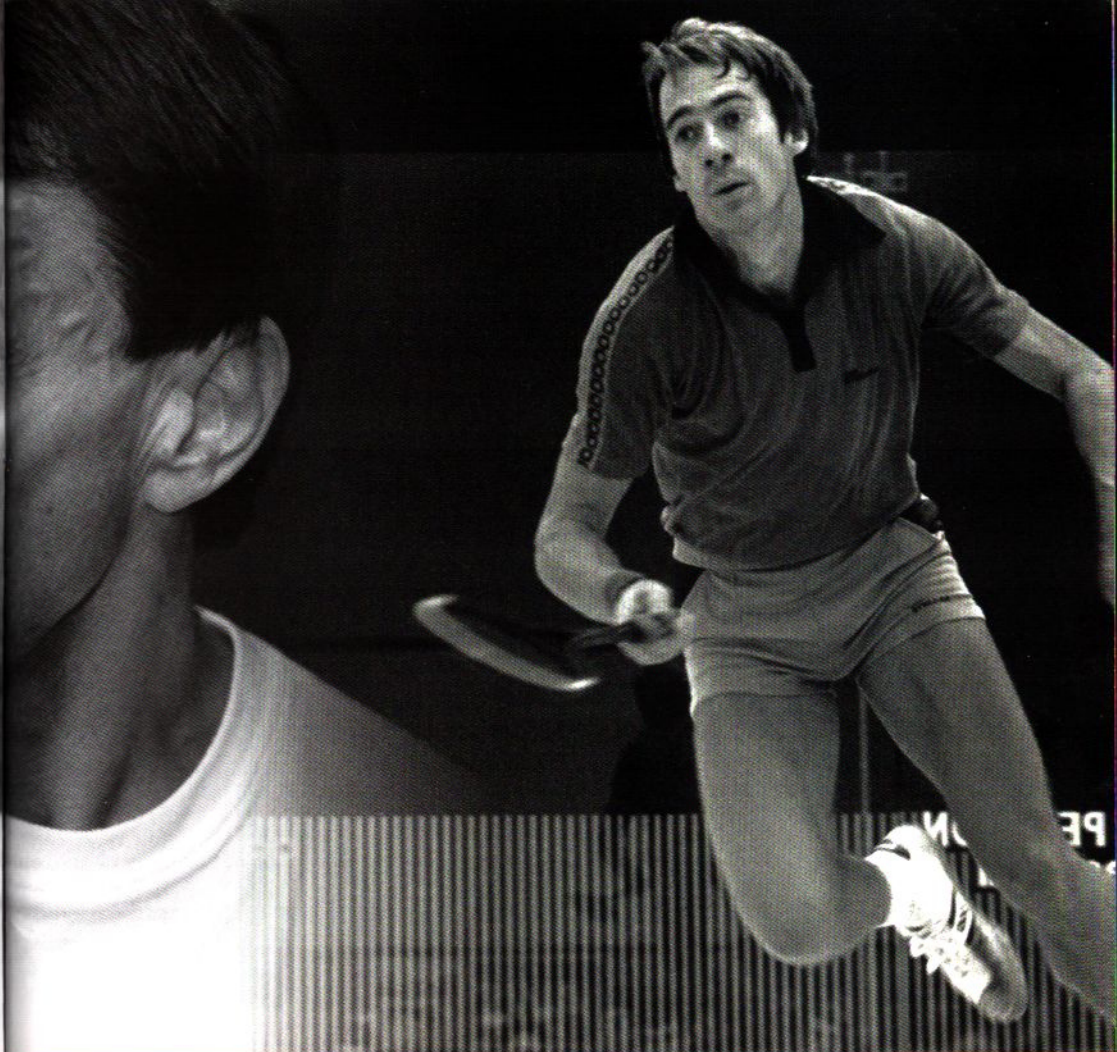
was a huge thing for the sport,” said Barrington.

“When I started in the game there was no real status for professional players - in fact professional players weren't really a thing. But during that era, after the formation of ISPA, every year we saw more players wanting to join the professional ranks.

“By the time we came to 1976, all the best players in the world were professional: the likes of Geoff Hunt, Gogi Alauddin, Qamar Zaman, Mohibullah Khan and so on. But they had no designated World title to compete for - something we felt had to be addressed urgently.

“The British Open was seen as the de facto World Open - it was the title that the players all wanted to win above any others - but the players had no real say in the tournament so we knew that it was necessary to create something bigger.”

Utilising their relationship with then British Open sponsors - Lucas Industries - the players, through Barrington, set about creating the World Open title and announced that the first ever championship would double up with the British Open - meaning the winner of that event would claim the sport's most significant title at that time alongside what would become the sport's most significant title in the future.



“I was negotiating with the sponsors at the time on behalf of ISPA and they loved the idea of putting their name to the World Open as well,” said the six-time British Open winner.

“There was a lot of resentment from the amateur bodies of the time towards the pros. There was the World Amateur Championship, but the professional players, of which there was a growing number every year, wanted to have their own World title to play for.

“So we used our influence and our contacts. We used the British Open as a platform. It was an established event, everyone knew it, so we piggy-backed on that reputation to stage the World Open.

“For the players, there was the chance to win the

British Open and a double whammy to win the World Open as well, which was a huge incentive, and organisationally it allowed us to do it with minimal fuss, which was a clever way of bringing it to life.

“And it brought with it huge publicity, more than we'd ever seen before then. It all came together to help us achieve what we wanted, which was to set down a marker that would allow us to take the sport to a wider audience.

“It was a very positive move for the sport to have a professional world title to compete for. It very quickly became the number one title to win and there is no doubt in my mind that 1976 was the springboard for the sport to be where it is at today.”

The exploits of Barrington, Hunt, Zaman, Khan and

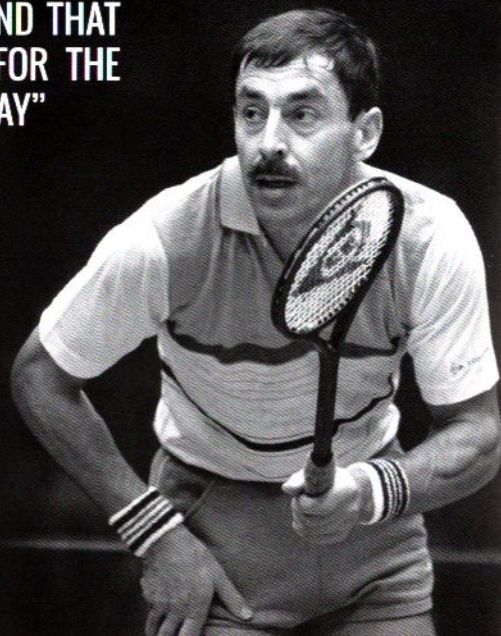
“THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT 1976 WAS THE SPRINGBOARD FOR THE SPORT TO BE WHERE IT IS AT TODAY”

more that year signalled the beginning of a new era in the history of squash and one that ultimately led the sport to becoming a thriving global sport.

Since then, the World Championship has grown to become the most anticipated, most exciting and most prestigious event on the PSA World Tour and while Barrington was left disappointed by his own exploits as a competitor, he has relished watching the event grow throughout the past four decades.

“Being a World Champion is a common denominator across all sports,” he said.

“To be World Champion, you are regarded as a very special player and that is something you can never take away - it transcends all sports.



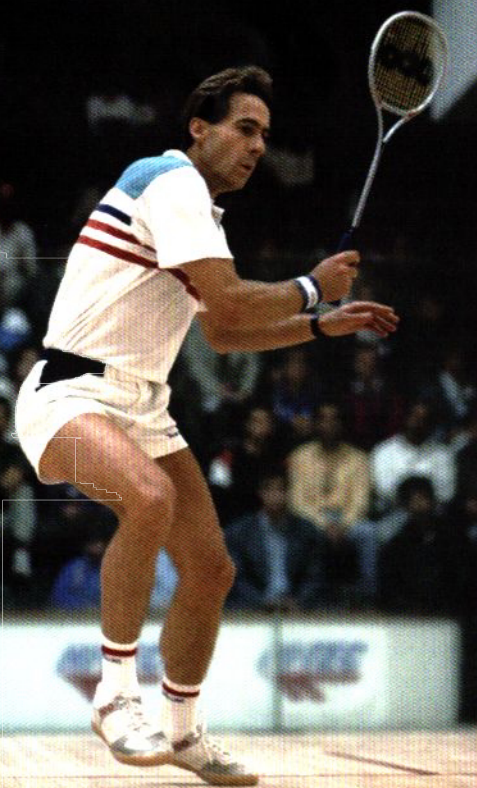
“My only disappointment was that I never won it! But I knew we had done something that was going to help take the sport to a new level and each year the level went up.

“Even today the level continues to go up year on year. You see it now with the incredible glass courts that can be placed anywhere, the sport has an amazing product to offer. And the game itself is devised in such a way that there is nothing quite like it - very few professional sports encourage you in the gladiatorial sense to break an opponent’s will mentally and physically in the pursuit of victory.

“Squash is one of the most demanding sports that has ever been conceived. The toll placed on a player at the top level is quite something and in recent years especially, the World Championship has brought the best out of the players and they, both the men and women, have produced some of the most monumental battles in all of sport.

“I feel fortunate to have seen and witnessed just how competitive and important the World Championships have become. Every player wants to win it - it is the single most significant title in the sport.

“While the players all appreciate the history and significance of the British Open and the likes of the U.S. Open, the one title that is bigger than the sport is the World Open. And they will all be going to Manchester this week knowing that it’s the title of a lifetime.”



CLUB TOOLKIT

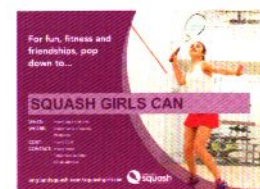
England Squash has launched their new Club Toolkit to help support thriving and sustainable clubs.



Packed full of practical advice, resources and ideas, the Toolkit aims to meet squash clubs’ needs and provide support in the right areas.

Club Toolkit highlights

- **Images:** download 50+ high quality copyright free images to use on your web and social media sites.
- **Posters:** download and edit posters to promote sessions on social media, around your club or in the local community.
- **Videos:** watch help guides and inspiring case studies that go behind the scenes of some of the country’s leading clubs.
- **Ideas:** get ideas on how to attract new members, plus find out how Northern Squash Club has introduced more than 5,000 school kids to squash.
- **Mini toolkits:** access mini toolkits for Squash Girls Can and Squash 57 featuring tips, images and posters.
- **Logos:** download the England Squash and Squash 57 logos (print and web versions).



Visit englandsquash.com/clubtoolkit

In order to access the downloads and videos in the Toolkit, you will need to be a member and have activated your England Squash website account.

THE CONTENDERS

WITH THE BIGGEST EVENT OF THE SQUASH CALENDAR SET TO LIGHT UP MANCHESTER THIS WEEK, WE LOOK AT WHO ARE THE MAIN CONTENDERS TO LIFT THE MOST COVETED TITLE IN SQUASH.



MOHAMED ELSHORBAGY

Having lost in the finals of both the 2012 and 2014 PSA World Championships, the biggest title in squash is now the only piece of silverware missing from Mohamed ElShorbagy's collection.

The 'Beast of Alexandria' had a disappointing campaign by his standards throughout 2016/17, during which he relinquished his two-year grasp on the World No.1 spot, but began this season in empathic fashion, winning the

last two World Series titles - the Qatar Classic and Hong Kong Open - in succession. Having made the final of every event he has played so far this campaign, the 26-year-old looks to be in dominant form and will be coming to Manchester hungry to make amends for his two previous runner-up finishes - and with a more mature outlook and the newly acquired support of two-time winner David Palmer in his corner, he will be confident of winning the World crown that would stamp his credentials as one of the top players of all-time.

But, having fallen to surprise defeats at the 2015 and 2016 editions when carrying the title-favourite tag, ElShorbagy will be fully aware of the threats facing him from a dangerous field and faces a challenging draw that could include meetings with Ramy Ashour, Nick Matthew and Gregory Gaultier en route to reaching the final.



GREGORY GAULTIER

After capitulating in the final of the 2006 World Championship, when he squandered multiple match balls against David Palmer, Gregory Gaultier looked destined never to win the sport's biggest prize - going on to lose in the 2007, 2011 and 2013 finals.

But victory over Omar Mosaad in the 2015 final saw the 'French General' end his World Championship hoodoo and since then, freed from the burden of expectation he has carried since 2006, he has gone from strength-to-strength, last season winning six consecutive events, dominating every opponent to come up against him, to become the sport's oldest ever World No.1

The 34-year-old's preparations for this season were hampered by an ankle injury that ruled him out until the recent Qatar Classic, so he comes into this event potentially short of game time but with the advantage that he should be fresher than many of his title rivals.

If he can replicate the level of combative, physical play that accompanied him throughout the first six months of 2017, he will be a difficult force to stop this week.



ALI FARAG

In his two previous World Championship appearances Ali Farag hasn't made it past the quarter-final stage, but the 25-year-old has brought his game

on to a new level throughout 2017 to become an established member of the top four - and many people's pick to triumph here this week.

He's reached seven finals, from 13 events played, throughout 2017 and captured his first ever World Series crown at the U.S. Open in October when he defeated ElShorbagy to take the title.

He's since played ElShorbagy three further times - including a thrilling five-game Hong Kong Open final - and despite losing on each occasion, he's shown impressive improvements and will come into this event hungry to show he's got the calibre necessary to go all the way.

On the opposite side of the draw to ElShorbagy, Gaultier, Nick Matthew and Ashour, Farag has a more favourable route to the finale - but he will be aware of the dangers facing him from the likes of Karim Abdel Gawad.



KARIM ABDEL GAWAD

The defending champion Karim Abdel Gawad

has had a quiet campaign so far in the 2017/18 season, failing to go beyond the semi-finals at any of the three World Series events played and bowing out of the U.S. Open in a surprise first round defeat.

But the 'Baby-faced-assassin' showed last season that he cannot be discounted recovering from a first round 2-0 deficit against Nathan Lake to come from nowhere and take the title - defeating Nick Matthew, ElShorbagy and Ashour to take the spoils.

However he'll have to replicate some of the best squash of his career to stand a chance of successfully defending his crown this week.



NICK MATTHEW

Returning to the scene of his 2013 World Championship win, Nick Matthew comes into this week as a dark horse

for glory - but with the 37-year-old retiring at the end of the season he will be throwing everything at this title and it would be foolish to discount him on home soil.

The Yorkshireman has made no secret of the fact that this year's World Championships is one of his main targets and, after reaching the semi-finals at the U.S Open and the last eight at the Qatar Classic, he has taken several weeks off in order to peak for this event - so he'll be coming in hungry and determined to end his World Championship story with a fourth triumph.



RAMY ASHOUR

Since conceding the 2016 World Championship final due to injury, the ever-enigmatic Ashour

has largely been an absentee figure on the PSA World Tour, but remains a player capable of destroying a draw and defying all expectations - epitomised in 2014 when he won his third World Championship crown in spell-binding fashion following a seven month injury lay-off.

He returned to PSA action two weeks ago at the Hong Kong Open when he suffered a shock first round defeat to Leo Au but, stung by that defeat and with his fitness potentially back, he'll be a force to watch as the week progresses.



CAMILLE SERME

The leading player during the 2016/17 season - when she won both the U.S. Open and Tournament of Champions - Camille Serme was left devastated when she failed to make the title-decider at the 2016 World Championships and will be more hungry than ever to win the title this week.

Her ability to combine impressive physical attributes with an ever-improving game have seen her improve year-on-year and with a favourable draw on paper, she will be confident of going at least one step further this week.



RANEEM EL WELILY

Arguably the most skilful player with racket in hand, El Welily will be desperate to make amends for her defeats in both the 2014 and 2016 World Championships this week and finally claim the World title that her abilities deserve.

The 28-year-old has been a consistent figure in the top five of the Women's World

Rankings since 2012 but has shown a mental frailness that has hindered her ability to perform on the biggest stage of them all. Steely back-to-back five-game wins over Nour El Tayeb, Joelle King and Camille Serme at the recent Hong Kong Open however hinted at a new found mental strength, and if she can maintain the type of composure she had at that event, she could well see her dreams come true this week.

LAURA MASSARO

2013 World Champion Laura Massaro will be hoping that home advantage can be on her side this week, when she'll be aiming to replicate the form that took her to the British Open title back in March - when she defeated El Sherbini in a highly impressive semi-final display en route to securing the crown.

Since then Massaro has failed to reach a World Series final, losing to El Sherbini and El Tayeb at the Hong Kong Open and U.S. Open, but with her 2013 World title coming six months after she won the 2013 British Open, she'll be dreaming of a historic repeat and will use all her mental fortitude and resilience to break down her opposition.



THE WOMEN

NOUR EL SHERBINI

After winning the 2015 title to become the youngest ever World Champion, and first Egyptian woman to win the sport's biggest prize, and then successfully defending her title at the 2016 edition, Nour El Sherbini comes into this week as the clear favourite to win a third successive World Championship crown.

Victory at the recent Hong Kong Open - where she dispatched Raneem El Welily, Laura Massaro and Nouran Gohar in style - will have fuelled her confidence of retaining the title and if she can find her rhythm in the early rounds, she will be practically unstoppable on current form.

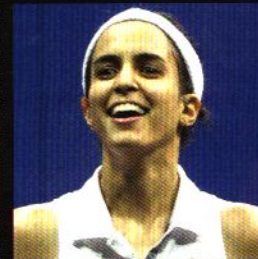
A tough draw, which could see her face Gohar in the quarter-finals and Massaro or U.S. Open winner Nour El Tayeb in the semi-finals, could be the only obstacle to overcome as she has failed to backup from multiple tough matches in succession in the past.



NOURAN GOHAR

At just 20-years-old, Nouran Gohar has already reached the World Championship semi-finals in both 2016 and 2017 and

will be hoping to go at least one step further this year courtesy of a hard-hitting and relentless style of play that is unmatched in the women's draw. But with both of those defeats coming against El Sherbini and with the two seeded to meet in the quarter-finals, it could be the pivotal match in the tournament.



NOUR EL TAYEB

After stunning the draw to defeat the World No.1, World No.2 and World No.4 en route to winning the U.S. Open in October - the

first World Series win of her career - Nour El Tayeb comes to Manchester as an outsider for the title but as arguably the in-form player on Tour.

She possesses a natural shot-making flair and confidence that can produce spell-binding results and has seen huge increases in physical strength and stamina over the past few seasons since injury ruled her out for the majority of the 2015/16 campaign.

If she can replicate the form she produced in October she will be a strong contender this week.



MY WORLD - NICK MATTHEW: 2013, MANCHESTER

In 2013, in front of a capacity crowd inside Manchester Central, England's Nick Matthew wrote his name into the squash annals as he clinched the third PSA World Championship title of his career by defeating Gregory Gaultier in a thrilling five-game rollercoaster finale.

This week, the now 37-year-old from Sheffield will compete in the World Championship for the finale time in his storied career - where victory would see him join Geoff Hunt and Amr Shabana in third place in the all time records list - and he took us back to that week four years ago when his Manchester dream came true.

"For me, the World Championships is the absolute pinnacle of the game. It's the one event that every player wants to peak for and it's a title that transcends the sport.

When you're a World Champion, that is something that can never be taken away from you and something that will live next to your name for the rest of your life.

I had won my first World title in Saudi Arabia in 2010. That was a win that cemented my place in the annals of the game - and I knew that if I never achieved anything else in my career that World title would always be there - but that win only fuelled me and I knew I wanted to kick on even

more and not just stop at one. Saudi was a strange win, because we played in a closed resort and I was on my own with the trophy after the final which was a strange feeling. A year later I defended the title in Rotterdam which was huge, especially because I was able to celebrate with the family members who were there with me but Manchester in 2013 was on a completely different level altogether.

I remember starting the week and not being one of the favourites for the title. All eyes were on the likes of Ramy Ashour and Gregory Gaultier because they'd both been in fantastic form and it had been a while since I had won a major title.

"Manchester in 2013 was on a completely different level altogether"



"I felt like a footballer playing a home match, the crowd were cheering for me and giving me encouragement"

a warm up event before the Worlds - which I knew was a risk to take.

I had gotten to the final at the US and was thumped by Greg in that match, losing 3-0. After that match I said to DP (David Pearson) that I was going to win the Worlds - whether it was arrogance or ignorance I don't know, but it was unlike me because I'm not normally bullish about my chances. But I felt like I had learned so much in that week.

up into two parts. The first part was when the event was taking place at SportCity and the goal there was simply to make sure I made it into the second part - which was the quarter-finals stage when the event moved to Manchester Central.

I knew that at that stage, with just eight men, anyone could win on their day and I came through the quarter-finals strong but in the semi-finals, I got lucky.

Ramy was totally out-classing me in the first game of our match. I told myself I was showing him way too much respect so I started attacking more in the second and the momentum was swinging round to my way but then he began to look like he was struggling with an injury - ultimately retiring because of it.

That situation is a really hard one to be in. Psychologically you feel sorry for the guy you're playing because no-one wants to win a match like that.

What was very lucky for me was that there was a squash court in the Midland Hotel where we were staying and I went straight there after I'd finished my media commitments and I hit on there for 45 minutes. That was a crucial moment for me because it allowed me to get that match out of my system and really help me prepare for the final that was coming

That summer I'd gotten married and had changed my schedule and I hadn't started the season as early as usual. I only had the U.S. Open as

And I knew I had a chance because I have a fantastic record in Manchester, but I couldn't get ahead of myself. I had to split the tournament

“Deep down I think I’d gotten to a point where I had maybe started to think that I wasn’t able to win another major title”

up the following day against Greg. That morning when I got to the venue and started walking towards the dressing rooms, I felt like a footballer playing a home match, the crowd were cheering for me and giving me encouragement just walking through the venue.

I knew the home crowd were there for me and I used that energy to my advantage. I managed to get on a roll at the start of the match and in the first two games, it felt like the match was going my way.

But then I had a match ball to win it 3-0 - which is something that never happens to me when I play against Greg - and I hit an awful crosscourt shot which allowed him to save it. At that point I thought I’d blown the opportunity.

Then the fourth game went by in a blur and it was all Greg. Before that fifth game started DP just told me to hit the ball - nothing technical, nothing complicated, just get on there and start hitting the ball and getting the nerves out of my system.

During the first rally of that fifth game I stepped up and just stuck my arm out on an attempted volley - I had no idea where the ball was, but it came off my racket and went millimetres above the

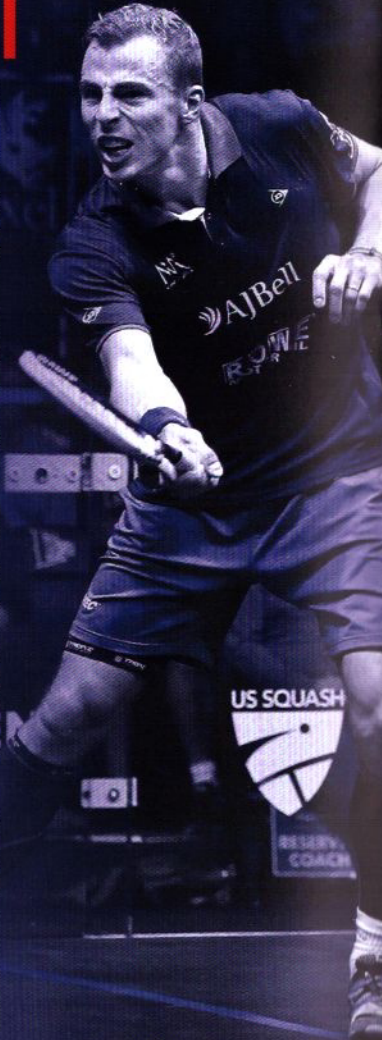
tin. I looked at Greg and I could see what he was thinking, he knew and I knew, that was the swinging moment and a few minutes later I was ahead and riding that wave once again and I’ll never forget that moment when the match ended.

There was a lot of emotion for me. Deep down I think I’d gotten to a point - it had been a long time since I had won a major event going into the Worlds - where I had maybe started to think that I wasn’t able to win another major title.

So to win in 2013, in Manchester, in front of a home crowd and my family and everybody else, was a huge moment and achievement for me.

To have a World title next to your name is something special, but to win the title in your own country is something that only a London 2012 Gold Medal would have topped.

It was an honour and a privilege to be in that position - and hopefully I can ride that wave of home support again this year because I can’t wait to be back in Manchester competing in my final World Championships and experiencing the vibe that the home crowd create.”



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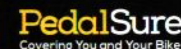
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More Olympic Champions to be announced...





GREGORY GAULTIER
FRA

SEEDED No.1 AGE 34

Despite being 34-years-old, Gregory Gaultier has been a mainstay in the top six for over a decade and continues to set the standard to which other players aspire to - dominating the PSA World Tour in early 2017.

'The General' owes his longevity to a potent blend of explosive pace, outrageous flexibility and court command that can see him outclass even the best in the world on his day - but having missed a lot of pre-season through injury, it remains to be seen if his fitness levels will be high enough this week.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2015 World Champion
2006, 2007, 2011 & 2013 runner-up



KARIM ABDEL GAWAD
EGY

SEEDED No.2 AGE 26

Karim Abdel Gawad has undergone a metamorphosis in the past two years, transforming from bit part player on the fringes of the World's Top 10 to become a genuine title contender and the current World Champion.

Gawad plays the game in a relaxed and languid manner which enables him to make the game look effortless - an ability that has seen him compared to the legendary four time World Champion Amr Shabana - and he will be a major contender for a second title this week.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2016 World Champion



MOHAMED ELSHORBAGY
EGY

SEEDED No.3 AGE 26

After dominating the Tour through 2015-2016, Mohamed ElShorbagy suffered what was by his standards a disappointing 2016-17 campaign as he fell from World No.1 to No.3.

But 'The Beast' - whose hard-hitting and remarkable physicality make him a tour de force when in full flow - has looked rejuvenated so far this season and is hungry to make amends for his 2012 and 2014 World Championship defeats against Ramy Ashour to claim the only major title missing from his locker.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2012 & 2014 runner-up



ALI FARAG
EGY

SEEDED No.4 AGE 25

A graduate of Harvard University, Ali Farag has emerged as one of the hottest rising stars of Egyptian squash over the past two years and has rapidly become a firm fan favourite.

A nimble and graceful player, Farag moves with the type of ease last seen in the great Jansher Khan, while he possesses a quiet aggressive streak that fuels his inner fire. Having already tasted World Series success at the U.S. Open in October, he will be a major obstacle to overcome this week.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2015 & 2016 quarter-finalist

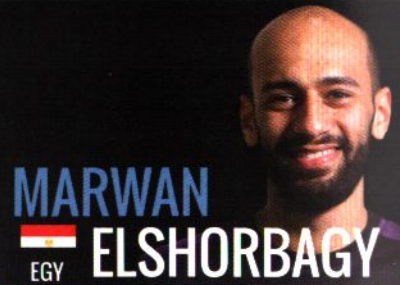


NICK MATTHEW
ENG

SEEDED No.5 AGE 37

37-year-old Nick Matthew is one of the oldest players on the PSA World Tour but 'The Wolf' continues to be a serial title challenger and will be competing in his last ever World Championship tournament this week. Physically tenacious, Matthew's relentless will to win is legendary and his mental strength unmatched amongst his peers. Characteristics that have enabled him to become the most successful English player ever - winning three World Championships and over 30 PSA World Tour titles. And he'll be aiming to bow out on a high this week to end his storied relationship with the World Championship.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2010, 2011 & 2013 World Champion



MARWAN ELSHORBAGY
EGY

SEEDED No.6 AGE 24

The younger brother of former World No.1 Mohamed, Marwan ElShorbagy is one of the most dangerous and under-rated players on Tour. With wins over all of his top calibre peers in recent months, the Bristol-based Egyptian has shown he has the game to win any major event.

With court-craft and tactical play that belies his tender age of 24, ElShorbagy uses deception and hold in a languid and relaxed style that mark him out as one of the most compelling players in the draw.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2015 & 2016 round of sixteen



TAREK MOMEN
EGY

SEEDED No.7 AGE 29

With a degree in Electronic Engineering, Tarek Momen is one of the most intelligent players on Tour but has so far failed to truly live up to his huge potential due to a propensity to lose both focus and discipline.

Known as 'The Viper', Momen is blessed with explosive movement while his subtle skills and delicate touch stand him out as one of the most lethal players around when going short and his recent run to the Qatar Classic final hinted that he may be on the verge of winning a major title.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2015 semi-finalist



PAUL COLL
NZL

SEEDED No.8 AGE 25

The first Kiwi in 20 years to reach the top 20, Paul Coll has gone from strength-to-strength since breaking onto the scene with a superb performance against James Willstrop in the 2015 Canary Wharf Classic when his athletic, diving-antics went viral in one of the greatest rallies of all time.

A crossfit fanatic, Coll is arguably the fittest player on Tour and uses his athleticism, stamina and solid basic game to extend rallies and grind his opponents down - a style akin to that of the great Jonah Barrington.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2015 Round of 32

SEEDS 9-16

- 9) **JAMES WILLSTROP**
2011 World Championship runner-up
- 10) **RAMY ASHOUR**
3x World Championship winner
- 11) **SIMON RÖSNER**
Germany's highest ranked player ever
- 12) **MOHAMED ABOUELGHAR**
2x World Junior Championship runner-up
- 13) **DARYL SELBY**
Competing in 11th PSA World Championship
- 14) **RYAN CUSKELLY**
Australia's highest ranked player
- 15) **CESAR SALAZAR**
First Mexican player ever ranked inside Top 20
- 16) **BORJA GOLAN**
Highest ranked Spanish player ever



NOUR
EGY **EL SHERBINI**

SEEDED No.1 AGE 22

The youngest ever, and Egypt's first, World Champion, Nour El Sherbini has taken the squash world by storm during her career to date - to win almost every major crown going including both the 2015 and 2016 Women's World Championship titles, and she is still only 22.

With a remarkable range of shots in her locker, El Sherbini also boasts a strong desire to win and a refusal to accept defeat - traits that have her on the path to becoming an all time great.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2015 & 2016 World Champion,
2013 runner-up



RANEEM
EGY **EL WELILY**

SEEDED No.2 AGE 28

The first Egyptian woman to become World No.1 in any sport, Raneem El Welily brought and end to Nicol David's dominance atop the women's squash rankings in September 2015.

Arguably the most naturally talented attacker in the women's game, El Welily's arsenal of shots is enviable and makes her almost unstoppable on her day - but her tendency to switch off and lose focus have cost her dearly in the past, including two World Championship finals.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2014 & 2016 runner-up



CAMILLE
FRA **SERME**

SEEDED No.3 AGE 28

The only Frenchwoman ever to win the British Open, U.S. Open and Tournament of Champions, Camille Serme has come into her own during the past season to become one of the most dangerous players around.

With a go-to backhand drop that rarely falters and a potent blend of pace, fitness and finesse, Serme has all the ingredients required to be a champion and will be fuelled on by her disappointment at failing to reach the title decider last year.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2017 semi-finalist



LAURA
ENG **MASSARO**

SEEDED No.4 AGE 34

Despite being one of the elder players in the top 10 Laura Massaro has gone from strength-to-strength throughout her career, becoming the first Englishwoman in 20 years to win the British Open in 2013 before going on to add the 2013 World Championship to her trophy collection.

With a relentless will to win and an ability to push through the pain barrier time and time again, Massaro backs up her determination with a solid all round game that make her a perennial challenger - and she'll be a major danger on home soil.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2013 World Champion,
2015 runner-up



NOURAN
EGY **GOHAR**

SEEDED No.5 AGE 20

At just 20, Nouran Gohar is the youngest player inside the women's top 10 but she has already become a serial title challenger, finishing as runner-up at the 2016 British Open before winning the 2016 Hong Kong Open.

Gohar's relentless hard-hitting style of play is unmatched across the Women's Tour and when she gets her tactical play correct, she is almost unstoppable and she'll be hoping to add to her two World Junior Championship wins.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2016 & 2017 semi-finalist



NICOL
MAS **DAVID**

SEEDED No.6 AGE 34

Possibly the greatest player in squash history, Nicol David spent an incredible nine consecutive years atop the World Rankings between 2006 - 2015, winning 80 World Tour titles including an unprecedented eight World Championship crowns.

One of the most natural athletes on the women's tour, boasting incredible athleticism and an ability to suffocate opponents on the court, David plays a low risk game that still makes her a name to watch in any draw.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
& 2014 World Champion



SARAH-JANE
ENG **PERRY**

SEEDED No.7 AGE 27

Having enjoyed the form of her career to date last season, Sarah Jane-Perry has established herself as England's number two and has enjoyed marquee wins over the likes of Nicol David, Laura Massaro and Raneem El Welily during the past year.

At 6 foot, Perry is one of the tallest players on the Women's Tour but she possesses deceptive guile and touch alongside a full repertoire of shots which make her a threat in all areas of the court.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2017 quarter-finalist



NOUR
EGY **EL TAYEB**

SEEDED No.8 AGE 24

After missing most of the 2015/16 season, Nour El Tayeb announced her return to the top of the women's game with an emphatic win at the U.S. Open in October when she beat El Sherbini, Massaro and El Welily to win her first World Series title.

With an unflappable ability to hit winners from all over and natural flair that makes her a delight to watch, the 2011 World Junior Champion comes into this week in the form of her life and will be hoping to claim the biggest title in squash.

BEST WORLD CHAMPS PERFORMANCE:
2014 quarter-finalist

SEEDS 9-16

- 9) **JOELLE KING**
Former World No.4
- 10) **ALISON WATERS**
3x World Championship semi-finalist
- 11) **ANNIE AU**
Hong Kong's No.1
- 12) **EMILY WHITLOCK**
Winner of 15 PSA titles
- 13) **OLIVIA BLATCHFORD**
Playing at career-best ranking
- 14) **JOSHNA CHINAPPA**
15x Indian National Champion
- 15) **VICTORIA LUST**
Winner of 9 PSA titles
- 16) **TESNI EVANS**
Highest ranked Welsh player ever

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MY WORLD - **NOUR EL SHERBINI**

2015, KUALA LUMPUR

(Played in 2016)

In 2016, then 20-year-old Nour El Sherbini of Egypt joined the pantheon of squash legends as she became the youngest ever winner of the Women's PSA World Championship title - coming from 2-0 down to beat England's Laura Massaro, then World No.1, in a thrilling five-game finale.

Then, on home soil in El Gouna, El Sherbini successfully defended her title and will travel to Manchester this week hoping to join Nicol David, Sarah Fitz-Gerald and Michelle Martin as just the fourth player in history to win three consecutive World titles.

We sat down with the World No.1 to go back to Malaysia and get her memories on what was a history-making week - when she also became the first Egyptian woman to win the World Championship.

"Winning the World Championships is the biggest thing that any squash player can do and it was the biggest dream that I had when I was growing up.

In 2016 I remember going to the event feeling confident about my form. I had been to three or four World Championships before that one and I had been to the final once before and lost - also in Penang in 2013 - so I felt like I had already been waiting for that perfect week for a long time.

But it's such a big title that I didn't know if I would ever actually win it.





In 2013 when I reached the final I was still very young. That tournament was a huge one for me. I was unseeded but got my first ever wins over Alison Waters and then Joelle King to reach the semi-finals where I was playing against Nicol David.

Nicol is a legend of the game and there was a lot of pressure on her at that event. But I was playing well against her and when I won, I couldn't really believe I had just beaten her and that I had reached the final.

Reaching that final was a huge thing. Both for me, but also back

a few years later, I felt like I was expecting a lot more of myself in the event. I had won the British Open and was playing well that season and I managed to start the tournament well and find my form from the first match.

But then, I was playing Nicol again in the quarters. On her court, in her country and it was our sixth or seventh meeting that season already. She was very hungry to do well, especially after what happened in 2013, and it was one of the hardest matches I've ever played against her.

“That night before the final, it felt like I was having flashbacks to 2013”

in Egypt. There had never been an Egyptian winner of the event, I was getting lots of messages and there was a lot of talk about it, and when the match started against Laura Massaro I was very nervous.

I was 6-2 up in the fifth game and then we were 8-8 and then it was over. But I wasn't sad at the end, I remember thinking that I was of course disappointed to lose but I had played really well that week and had been very close to winning - and that was a big confidence boost for me.

So, returning to Malaysia again

Winning that match was very important. I was playing well and felt like I was in-form but in the semi-finals I wasn't confident. I was playing Nouran (Gohar) and she had beaten me in our last match and I thought that might have been the end of my tournament. But I managed to relax on court and play one of my best matches of the season - which meant I was in the final again.

It was strange. I had beaten Nicol in Malaysia in 2013 to reach the final and play Laura. In 2015, I beat Nicol in Malaysia and made

it into the final to play Laura once again.

That night before the final, it felt like I was having flashbacks to 2013. There were expectations on me in 2013 to become the first Egyptian World Champion. Those same expectation were there again in 2015 and I was playing the same opponent, in the same country, and I was worried that the end result might be the same again.

When I woke up the next day for the final I was super excited. I was so excited for the match and I could see that everyone in the Egypt team was nervous and excited as well.

But I was too excited. I didn't play well to start with and I lost the first two games.

I thought it was all over and that it was going to be a repeat of 2013. Laura was playing well and I just wasn't able to put any pressure on her - I felt like I just wasn't playing well.

(Amr) Shabana then spoke to me after that second game and told me to play every point like it's the last point of the match. He and Raneem (El Welily) managed to get me to relax and forget about the circumstances - without Shabana there I would not have been able to comeback, he made a huge difference throughout the tournament.

So I started to relax and the match started to swing back my way but when we started the fifth game the stress was back on. But I couldn't let that stop me from playing - I was trying so hard not to think about anything other than hitting the ball.

She's such a tough competitor that you can't let her get ahead, or give her any advantage, and I was coming back against her over and over again but I managed to get to 10-8 - which was different from 2013, because in that match we had been tied 8-8 before she got a run to take the title.

Before serving I told myself that I'd attack at the first chance. Then, just after serving, the ball came at me and I just went for it - I couldn't believe it when I saw the backhand go into the nick to win.

I just couldn't believe it!

It was something I had dreamed about - for it to become a reality was amazing. It was surreal! I could see everyone was so excited and so happy. My Dad was going crazy, my mum was crying and Raneem and Shabana and Omneya (Abdel Kawy) were all hugging and smiling - it was an incredible feeling.

And it became a huge thing back in Egypt. I felt like a celebrity when I got back to Egypt, there were lots of media interviews which made it

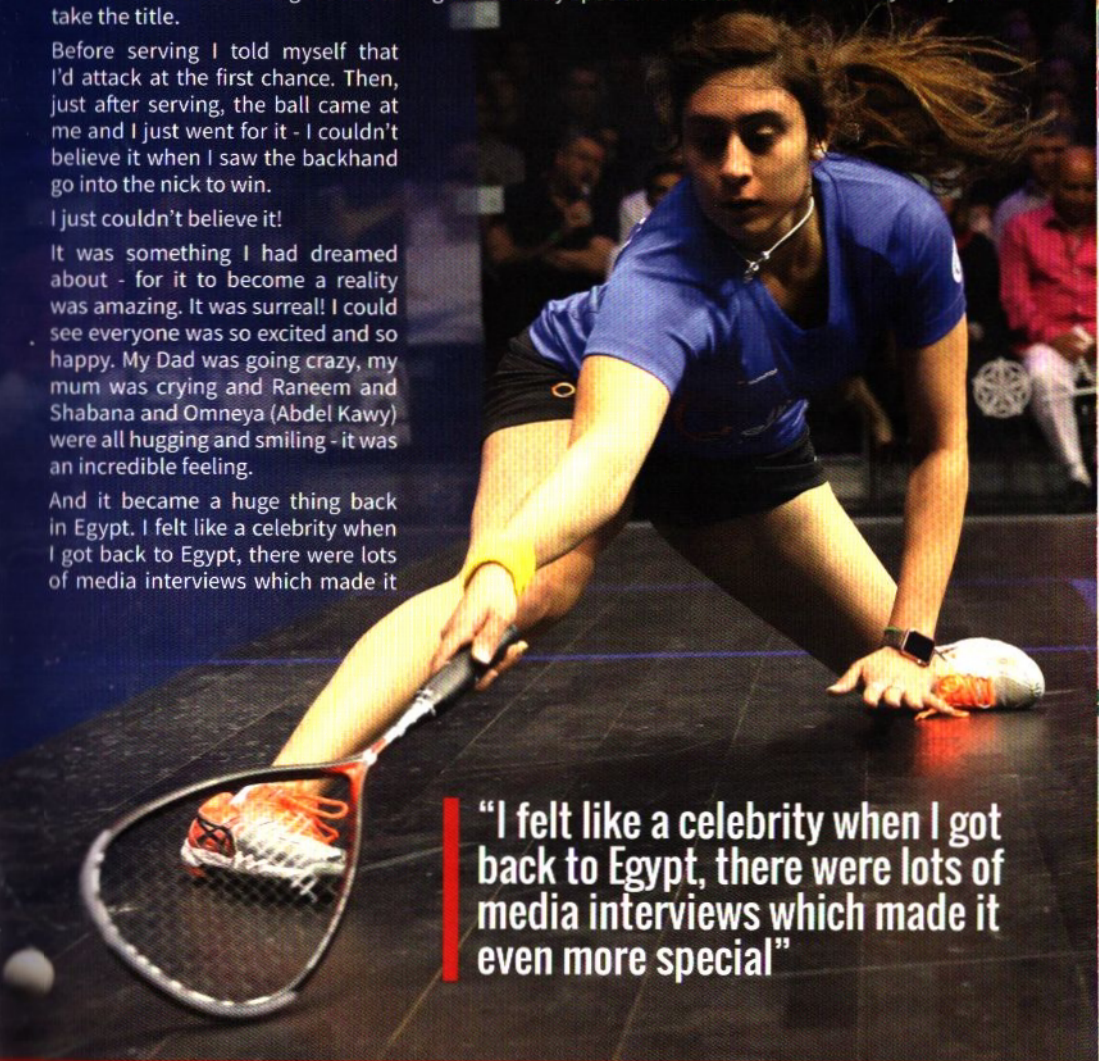
“It was something I had dreamed about - for it to become a reality was amazing. It was surreal!”

even more special because I never thought people back home would know anything about me.

Being able to say that you are World Champion is an amazing feeling - it's big! Having your name alongside legends of the game is really special. It was an

honour to put my name beside theirs.

And to be the first Egyptian woman to win a World Championship, become the youngest World Champion and also to become World No.1 all at the same time - it was an incredible day in my life.”



“I felt like a celebrity when I got back to Egypt, there were lots of media interviews which made it even more special”

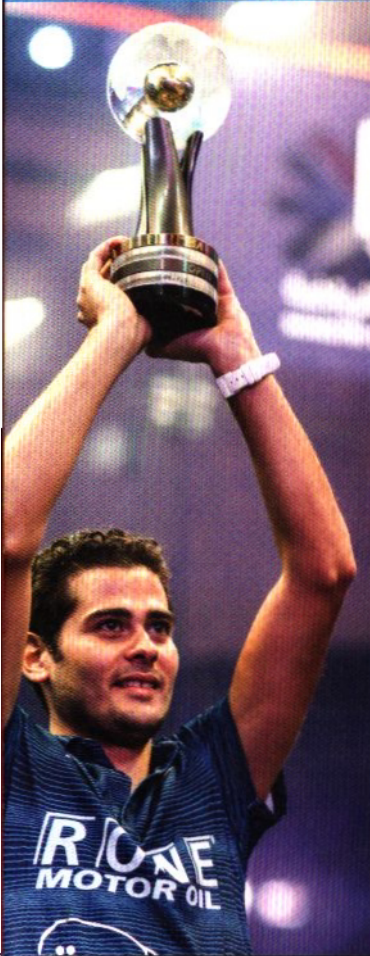
STORY OF

PSA MEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

LOCATION: CAIRO, EGYPT

WINNER: KARIM ABDEL GAWAD

RUNNER-UP: RAMY ASHOUR



The 2016 PSA Men's World Championship was one of the most dramatic and enthralling editions ever of the sport's showpiece tournament, with surprise winner Karim Abdel Gawad emerging to take the crown after injury befell his fellow Egyptian Ramy Ashour in the title decider.

In what was one of the most tightly-contested World Championships in history - with twists and turns coming at all stages - the outcome could have been very different as Gawad's event almost came to a premature end on the very first day of competition.

Away from the SQUASHTV cameras, the 'Baby-Faced Assassin' slumped to a two-game deficit against England's Nathan Lake - then ranked 74 in the world - to stand on the verge of an early exit on the side courts. Gawad looked out of sorts as Lake controlled him for large periods but the local man managed to battle back as Lake's brave resistance finally faltered after 63 minutes, with Gawad taking three games without reply to earn his place in the second round.

Gawad's main title rivals though were enjoying an easier run on the glass court with current World No.1 Gregory Gaultier beginning his World Championship title defence

with a win over New Zealand's Paul Coll, while Ramy Ashour swept aside World No.51 Todd Harrity to begin his campaign and join tournament favourite Mohamed ElShorbagy in securing safe passage to the next round.

In the second round of competition Malaysia's Nafiizwan Adnan came out on top in a gruelling 102-minute encounter with 2015 tournament runner-up Omar Mosaad to claim the biggest win of his career, prevailing 3-2 to reach the third round of the World Championships for the first time.

That victory came not long after Gawad was once again taken to five, this time by fellow Egyptian Mohamed Abouelghar. Gawad let a two-game lead slip against the younger Egyptian but managed to refocus in the fifth to do just enough to come out an 11-9 winner and advance to the last 16.



For James Willstrop, 2011 runner-up, the tournament was over though as he bowed out at the hands of Ali Farag, with Mathieu Castagnet another big name to fall by the wayside in round two.

Farag continued his progress with a 3-1 win over former World No.4 Miguel Angel Rodriguez in the last sixteen to set up a nail-biting quarter-final clash with then-World No.1 Mohamed ElShorbagy - who saw off compatriot Karim Ali Fathi in straight games.

England's three-time World Champion Nick Matthew was also a winner in round three, beating Simon Rösner to ensure that he would take on Gawad for a place in the semi-finals.

There were also wins for Ramy Ashour, Fares Dessouky, Tarek Momen and Gregory Gaultier - with Momen upsetting seventh seed Marwan ElShorbagy in a thrilling five-game encounter - to complete the quarter-final line up.

Just weeks after their meeting in the semi-finals of the Al Ahram Open in front of the iconic Great Pyramid of Giza it was ElShorbagy who came through a fiery encounter with Farag to keep his title challenge alive and move to within one win of a third World Championship final appearance.

The tournament top seed - a runner-up to fellow Egyptian Ramy Ashour in 2012 and 2014 - took the match 11-8, 11-5, 11-8 in 45 minutes to set up a climactic semi-final clash

with Gawad, who prevailed against Matthew after the Englishman was plagued by illness.

Meanwhile, Ramy Ashour and Gregory Gaultier ensured that they would go head-to-head in the other semi-final after they managed wins over Fares Dessouky and Tarek Momen, respectively.

But, on the morning of the semi-finals, Gaultier suffered an ankle injury during his practice session and was unable to take to the court against Ashour, leaving the Egyptian maverick to move straight through to a fifth World Championship final.

While spectators missed out on seeing the latest chapter of Gaultier and Ashour's rivalry, Gawad and ElShorbagy served up a match to remember in a thrilling five-game clash that saw Gawad come back from 2-1 down to earn a place in the sport's biggest tournament for the first time in his career.

And he would become just the third Egyptian player of all time to lift the coveted World Championship trophy when Ashour was forced

to retire in the fourth game of their final fixture after suffering a recurrence of the hamstring injury that has ravaged the last three years of his career.

The 25-year-old from Giza, battled back from a game down to go 2-1 up after a series of explosive rallies brought a vociferous crowd at the Wadi Degla club to their feet time and time again and when Ashour was unable to continue, the title belonged to Gawad.

"I can't believe it," said Gawad after the match.

"It has been a very long week, I didn't have a good start but I think I had good performances this week. I'm grateful to my team as I was able to get back on court day after day and I'm really happy to win."

That victory acted as a springboard for Gawad, who followed it up with a maiden World Series crown two weeks later at the Qatar Classic, while the Tournament of Champions title and World No.1 spot would follow for the Egyptian before the season was out.



Another star of the quarter-finals was 11-year-old squash player Sumner Malik, who joined SQUASHTV's Joey Barrington and Paul Johnson on commentary for Ashour's match with Dessouky.

As part of the #Sunshine4Sumner campaign, the PSA gave Sumner, who has been diagnosed with Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG) - a rare form of brain tumour - and his family a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel to Cairo for the PSA Men's World Championship, where he attended the tournament as a VIP guest and stayed in the same hotel as the players.



WADI DEGLA

PSA MEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
CAIRO, EGYPT 2016

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STORY OF

2016

PSA WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

LOCATION: EL GOUNA, EGYPT

WINNER: NOUR EL SHERBINI

RUNNER-UP: RANEEM EL WELILY

Egypt's Nour El Sherbini saved her best performances of the 2016/17 season for the biggest tournament of them all as she swept the opposition aside to become the sport's youngest ever double World Champion.

Held at El Gouna's New Marina against the backdrop of Egypt's stunning Red Sea, it was the first women's professional squash tournament staged in the area, and it was El Sherbini who wrote her name into the history books once again, after becoming the youngest ever World Champion in Malaysia 12 months prior.

After failing to win a major title in almost a year leading into the event, El Sherbini kickstarted her title defence with a win over Canadian qualifier Samantha Cornett to get off to a strong start, while second seed Camille Serme dispatched Salma Hany Ibrahim in straight games as all but one of the first round matches went to seeding, with then-World

No.27 Olivia Blatchford of the United States taking out Australia's Donna Urquhart - then ranked above the US No.1 - to cause the only upset.

The likes of 2014 runner-up Raneem El Welily, 2013 winner Laura Massaro, record eight-time champion Nicol David and Egypt's World No.5 Nouran Gohar also moved safely through to round two but England's former World No.3 Alison Waters became the first top eight seeded player to bow out of the tournament as she fell to India's Joshna Chinappa in the second round.

Elsewhere, Massaro and El Welily ensured that they would go head-to-head in a mouthwatering quarter-final fixture after they claimed respective wins over New Zealand's Joelle King and Blatchford while a win for Nicol David over Annie Au saw her through to face Gohar, who negotiated a tricky encounter with Nour El Tayeb.

El Sherbini and Sarah-Jane Perry lined up in the other quarter-final courtesy of wins over Tesni Evans and Victoria Lust, respectively. And El Sherbini continued to play with confidence as she dismantled Perry in straight games, while Gohar had to be at her best to fight off a late comeback from David to send the Malaysian legend home 3-2.

Having lost their last four consecutive meetings, El Welily got her revenge on Massaro to down the Englishwoman courtesy of a display of the highest calibre which came just before the heavens opened and the rain poured down on the all-glass court.

With the court rendered unplayable, the

action moved inside to the plaster courts, where Serme managed to come through a thrilling 70-minute battle with India's Joshna Chinappa to claim a place in only her second ever World Championship semi-final.

But the French charge was halted by El Welily as the 2014 runner-up continued to enjoy a purple patch of shot making artistry, which set up the first ever all-Egyptian Women's World Championship final - with El Sherbini defeating Gohar 3-1.

El Welily headed into the final attempting to vanquish the memories of her capitulation in the 2014 title decider when she surrendered four championship balls to lose to David but El

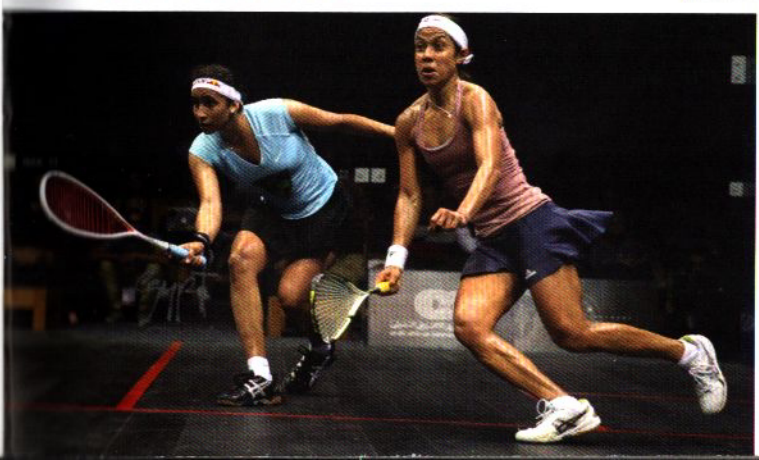
Sherbini - who had defeated Massaro 12 months earlier to become the youngest women's World Champion of all time - was in spell-binding form.

The 21-year-old hit her targets well and never allowed fellow Alexandrian El Welily to get into her game, closing the win out by an 11-8, 11-9, 11-9 scoreline to etch her name into the history books once more.

"I'm over the moon," El Sherbini said after her win.

"It felt like I wasn't going to win anything this season, but once I knew that it was going to be in Egypt, I was so excited.

"I'm really happy to win in front of my home crowd."



GREATEST COMEBACKS IN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP HISTORY

THE PSA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS HAVE BEEN HOME TO SOME OF THE GREATEST MATCHES OF ALL TIME, WITH THE HONOUR OF BECOMING THE SPORT'S WORLD CHAMPION SEEING PLAYERS DELVE INTO THEIR MENTAL RESERVES LIKE NO OTHER TOURNAMENT ON THE PSA WORLD TOUR.

AS SUCH, A NUMBER OF INCREDIBLE COMEBACKS HAVE ROCKED THE PRESTIGIOUS TOURNAMENT SINCE ITS INAUGURAL EDITION IN 1976, WITH PLAYERS FIGHTING BACK FROM THE BRINK OF DEFEAT TO CLAIM THE SPORT'S BIGGEST TITLE AND A PLACE IN HISTORY.

HERE, WE HAVE A LOOK BACK AT SOME OF THE GREATEST FINAL COMEBACKS EVER TO GRACE THE DISTINGUISHED TOURNAMENT.

2002

DAVID PALMER (AUS) BT JOHN WHITE (SCO)
3-2: 13-15, 12-15, 15-6, 15-14, 15-11

Legendary Australian player David Palmer forged a comeback reputation at the World Championship and was forced to come from behind to collect the first of his two World Championship crowns in 2002 when he weathered a storm against Scotland's John White.

Palmer had beaten White in all three of the pairs previous meetings, however a dominant display from White – in which he inflicted a barrage of drops and drives on his opponent – saw him storm two games ahead.

The momentum of the match flipped in the third game as Palmer took it to gain a foothold in the game but White raised his game to go match ball up at 14-13.

Palmer cut a composed figure though to level and White returned his next serve into the tin to send the match into a decisive fifth where, boosted by his superb comeback, Palmer stayed on top to complete the victory after an epic 102-minute contest.

2006

DAVID PALMER (AUS) BT GREGORY GAULTIER (FRA)
3-2: 9-11, 9-11, 11-9, 16-14, 11-2

Frenchman Gregory Gaultier's imperious form during 2016/17 saw him break records and make history as he became the oldest World No.1 of all time – more than a decade after one of the lowest points of his career.

Gaultier – then just 23 years of age – had upset the seedings to reach his maiden World Championship final and stunned three-time winner and defending champion Amr Shabana in the semi-finals to set up a showdown with Australia's David Palmer, who was a losing finalist the previous year.

Played in front of the iconic Great Pyramids of Giza in Cairo, Egypt, Gaultier was in majestic form in the early stages of the encounter as he surged into an early lead, producing some dazzling squash to take the opening two games before Palmer fought back in the third to halve the deficit.

Gaultier steadied the ship and looked a certainty to join the pantheon of World Champions when he found himself 10-6 up with four match balls in hand. But a combination of inexperience, nerves and excitement caught up with the Frenchman and Palmer capitalised to level the match against all the odds and force a decider.

A fifth-game collapse from Gaultier saw Palmer storm to victory for the loss of just two points to take his second World Championship title, while the defeat would prove to be a damaging one for Gaultier as he went on to lose a further three World Championship finals.

The 'French General' finally got the monkey off his back though in the 2015 instalment as he overpowered Egypt's Omar Mosaad to claim an emotional win in Bellevue, United States – earning his rightful place in the history books.

2014

NICOL DAVID (MAS) BT RANEEM EL WELILY (EGY)

5-11, 11-8, 7-11, 14-12, 11-5

Malaysian superstar Nicol David has more World Championship titles to her name than any other player – eight to be exact – and the most recent of those victories saw her showcase the mental resilience and nerves of steel that have set her apart as one of the sport's greatest ever players.

David was up against Egypt's Raneem El Welily – who would go on to end David's nine-year reign at World No.1 less than a year later – in the final and, buoyed by partisan home support in Cairo, El Welily looked certain to become the first Egyptian woman to lift the World Championship crown.

David had fallen in the last four of the previous year's tournament after a shock semi-final defeat to then-18-year-old Nour El Sherbini and the ghost of that loss looked to weigh heavily on the experienced Malaysian, with only a late comeback against Omneya Abdel Kawy seeing her reach the title-decider.

To the uninitiated, it was El Welily who looked like the eight-time World Champion of the two as she played with a swagger and an incredible shot-making ability to nullify David's retrieval skills and she was rewarded with four match balls to put herself on the cusp of victory.

El Welily wavered though as an enforced tin enabled David to rally and it was the woman from Malaysia who ended up closing out the fourth to set up a deciding fifth game.

With El Welily's confidence shattered, David eased to victory in the fifth to seal an emotional eighth World Championship crown.

2004

THIERRY LINCOU (FRA) BT LEE BEACHILL (ENG)
3-2: 5-11, 11-2, 2-11, 12-10, 11-8

Former World No.1 Thierry Lincou is the second Frenchman on this list but he was on the right side of a comeback after he recovered from match ball down to overcome England's Lee Beachill in Doha, Qatar.

Lincou had reached the final a year earlier in 2003 but fell to Egypt's Amr Shabana.

Eager to atone for that defeat, Lincou had reached the 2004 final after saving match ball against Graham Ryding in the semi-finals and he looked down and out again in the title decider after a series of well-structured rallies from then-World No.1 Beachill saw the Englishman go 10-9 up in game four.

But Lincou held his nerve and contained Beachill with an expertly-taken backhand winner to draw level before two further winners from the man from France took the fixture into a fifth game.

At 6-6 in the final game, Beachill began to tire and Lincou pounced, attacking with vigour to become the first Frenchman ever to win the iconic title.

2015

NOUR EL SHERBINI (EGY) BT LAURA MASSARO (ENG)
3-2: 6-11, 4-11, 11-3, 11-5, 11-8

While El Welily failed in her quest to become Egypt's first female squash World Champion, the country didn't have to wait long for a maiden winner as Nour El Sherbini came back with a vengeance against England's Laura Massaro to take the sport's biggest prize.

The fixture was a repeat of the 2013 final – where Massaro defeated a teenage El Sherbini – and the result looked to be going in Massaro's favour once more as she played with pinpoint accuracy and masterful control to go two games ahead.

But El Sherbini finally won the length battle between the two in the third game as the tide began to turn and, with the wisdom of Shabana ringing in her ears after he offered her some wise words at the end of the second, El Sherbini duly levelled to set up a spectacular final game showdown.

The two went head-to-head in a climactic end to the encounter, with a monster rally at 8-6 to El Sherbini bringing the crowd to their feet.

And it was El Sherbini who broke forward to take the victory, becoming the youngest ever World Champion of all time, while she also overtook Massaro in the World Rankings to become World No.1 – a position she has held ever since.

