

October 2018

Potomac Squash Club Newsletter

Editor: Tom Cutler

Squash Pro Profile: Nouran El Torky



Nouran El Torky has brought new energy to the club giving lessons and conducting clinics having been ranked as high as 41st in the world. Currently ranked number 68, Nouran and her older sister Heba, currently ranked 47th but has been as high as 19th, are among the strongest squash sisters in the world. In fact, players from Egypt currently hold the top three places on the women's pro circuit and the top four slots on the men's pro tour. When asked what is the secret to the success of Egyptian squash, Nouran smiles, and says it is not the Pyramids, the Sphinx or the River Nile but in the training methods.

Gymnastics was the first sport Nouran got involved in because she bounced around so much as a little girl. Born in Alexandria, Egypt, Nouran did not play squash until she was 9 years old. Her first time on the court was quite fortuitous as her father was taking Nouran and Heba out to

play tennis. However, the Egyptian sun was extra blazing hot that day and they had left their sun hats at home. So, instead, their father took them inside looking for an indoor activity which led to the squash court.

Being the younger sister, Nouran would watch Heba play at their club and then sometimes someone would hit with her for 5 minutes. She started playing more and entered her first tournament at 11 where she lost in the semi-finals and then had to forfeit her match for third place because she had also entered a gymnastics tournament at the same time. Then, one day her gymnastics coach chastised Nouran because her right hand was getting stronger than her left hand due to squash, and complained that this muscular imbalance was not good for performing her bar and beam routines. In tears, Nouran talked to her Dad and that was it: no more gymnastics. Nouran began training in earnest twice a day, 6 days a week, to make her mark as a squash player! She is a four-time member of Egypt's national juniors team and currently plays 5-6 hours per day, six days a week. To aid in recovery, Nouran stretches before and after every session on the court.



Nouran at 14 as a member of Egypt's national juniors team which won the 2008 World Junior Women's Team Championship in Hong Kong.

Nouran credits gymnastics with giving her fitness and flexibility, and a solid foundation for her development as a top squash pro. Nouran remembers that "I used to wake-up at 5 a.m. to run on the beach with my coach then head to the courts for training, go to school, take a nap, then back to the courts at night to train, doing my homework for school during the breaks. There were many sacrifices and I missed many family events and social gatherings with friends, but I

had found my path in life, and our family supported both me and my sister Heba. I am very grateful for those who were there for me, including my coaches.”

Nouran advises aspiring junior players to make sure to keep squash “fun” and not to put too much pressure on yourself, especially when you suffer the inevitable losses. Learning from these losses can help you win. She adds that “it’s very important to stay focused during your practice to learn the skills even if the drills sometimes seem boring. That repetition during practice enables you to execute your skills under game pressure and competition.” The countless players of all skill levels who have taken lessons or participated in clinics that Nouran leads will attest to her hard work on the court and knowledge of the game.



Nouran played a tough match against Nele Gills of Belgium in the quarterfinals of the September 2017 Open de International Squash pro tournament in Nantes, France. Gills took second that year and won the tournament in 2018.

Squash Safety: Importance of Eye Protection by Dr. Laurie Wenger

As an ophthalmologist, I have the privilege of helping to restore vision through surgical procedures, like cataract removal. Unfortunately, in my practice, I also am called upon to deal with eye trauma caused by foreign objects ranging from fingers to pencils—some of which do not end well. I am hoping that we can put an end to completely preventable blunt force eye trauma caused by squash balls and rackets.



Studies show that squash is among those sports with the highest rate of eye-related injuries---perhaps because the ball has a unique size, allowing it to penetrate the protective orbital bones. At the speeds attained by the ball, it is a setup for blunt trauma to the eye. This blunt trauma causes an abrupt increase in pressure to the eye, putting the ocular components on stretch. The results can be devastating, resulting in permanent blindness and even loss of the globe.

So, you can imagine how uneasy I feel every time I show up at PSC and find fellow players and coaches neglecting to protect their eyes upon entering the squash court. Just like non-marking shoes and a racquet, goggles are a vital part of our equipment. However, despite the obvious risk and the posted warnings, the question is why don't more players wear appropriate eye protections?

In part, this is a cultural problem common to squash players around the world. We watch the pros on Squash TV. We see them on posters and magazine covers without eye protection. We fool ourselves into believing that they don't need protection—and perhaps we don't either. Nobody ever expects to be the victim of an errant swing or random bounce. These accidents happen at any level of play, from beginners to pros. In fact, I will confess to having unintentionally hit a crosscourt shot directly into the orbit of my pro during a lesson.



US Squash wisely adopted a policy many years ago requiring the use of appropriate, protective eye-wear “at all events in the United States including tournaments, exhibitions, clinics and leagues which are sanctioned only by US Squash or organized by its member districts.” The link for US Squash approved eyewear is: <https://www.ussquash.com/officiate/protective-eyewear/>. Protective eyewear must meet or exceed American Society for Testing and Materials standard (ASTM-F803) and “streetwear spectacles...do not meet the standard.” Keep the image shown above in mind the next time you step out on the court. I recommend keeping two pairs in your squash bag and insist that your fellow squash player or coach wear them. The last thing you want to be responsible for is an injury to a playing partner, coach or competitor.



Dr. Laurie Wenger

PSC Junior Girls Excel: Profiles of Emma Wolf and Aalia Husain

Over the years PSC has had a number of junior boys and girls grow into highly competitive players and recently it has been the junior girls who have really shined. For example, **Hannah Chaudhry**, who was featured in the May 2017 issue of the PSC newsletter, is 19 now and off to Drexel University where she will play on the squash team. **Valentina Della Maddalena**, who was featured in the September 2017 issue, has been excelling in inter-club league play.

In this issue we feature **Emma Wolf**, who won the 2018 Silver GU-19 national championship, and **Aalia Husain** who was named an All American by US Squash. These young ladies have taken PSC junior girls to a new level of accomplishment and excellence that deserves our recognition.



Vintage photo of Hannah Chaudhry as GU 11; Valentina Della Maddalena and Aalia Husain.

Emma Wolf on a Winning Streak



Emma Wolf beams after her big win in the GU17 at the 2018 Virginia Junior GOLD Tournament in Charlottesville.

Emma Wolf is an exciting new star who was first exposed to squash at an early age watching her parents play, Vladimir Wolf and Eva Zuffova. Emma started playing herself at around 8 years old, and showed potential from the start helped by lessons from Jahangir Naseem. Her parents recall that at first she did not like squash - she was already active in gymnastics, swimming and as an equestrian plus being a top student - and had to be “encouraged” to play until one day a light turned on and ever since then Emma has been tearing up the courts as a squash phenomenon.

She started tournaments at GU13 and also began inter-club league play to the point that now she plays in the National Capital squash league Premier Division. What animates her game is a mix of form, athleticism and competitive spirit. Long time squash maven Malcolm Jensen observes that “Emma hits the ball beautifully and generates amazing pace. She covers the court so absolutely that the impression is that she plays on a smaller court than do the rest of us.” She is also one of the hardest hitters at the club but can hit a drop shot on a dime.

Although she is only 15, Emma is currently ranked #14 by US Squash in the GU17. In April 2018 she won the GU19 division at the U.S. Junior Silver Squash Championships held at Meadow Mill Athletic Club in Baltimore, going undefeated through four rounds, with both the semi-finals and the finals going 5 games. This accomplishment was very demanding physically and mentally, and gave Emma valuable experience for future competitions. In her own words, Emma observes that “My biggest problem playing tournaments is that I panic once things do not go smoothly. What I learned was that I have to stay as calm and consistent as possible. I have kept this in my mind ever since.” And indeed, she did. In May, she took third place in the Washington D.C. Junior Gold GU17. In June, she won the GU17 at the Virginia Summer Gold Tournament in Charlottesville. And in July, playing in GU17 singles, she took third place at the Cincinnati Midwest Summer Gold Tournament.



Emma Wolf wins the 2018 National GU19 Silver Championship in Baltimore.

Emma has high aspirations for her squash game and works very hard, playing four or five times a week. She just got an invitation from US Squash to join the U.S. Junior Team for the British Junior Open in January 2019 that Emma describes as a “huge accomplishment for me.” Looking ahead, her goal is to maintain her ranking and hopefully become one of “the top 10 players, and enjoy playing along with managing school and all my other interests (varsity runner and horses) at the same time”. Success never comes in a straight line but the Potomac Squash Club is very proud of Emma and the dynamic player she has become already, and her potential to be a future champion on and off the court.

Aalia Husain Earns All-American Squash Honors



Aalia Husain retrieves a shot deep in the back corner in a school match.

This past spring US Squash recognized then high school freshman Aalia Husain as an All-American, honoring those players who have achieved at the highest level of competitive excellence in junior squash. "Aalia is an outstanding squash player, and her sportsmanship is unparalleled," says Carole Grunberg, the Potomac School varsity girls squash coach. "She represents the best of Potomac athletics. I am delighted that the Mid-Atlantic Squash Organization and US Squash honored her with this award."

Coach Grunberg provides some background: "Playing number one for Potomac in her freshman year, Aalia won all of her League matches. She had only two losses in the 2017-18 season. At the High School National Championships, Aalia led Potomac to the Division IV national title,

winning four matches without losing a single game. Her current ranking is #48 in the "girls under-15" category and she made the quarterfinals at the US Squash Silver National Championships last April. Her sportsmanship on and off the court equals her playing accomplishments."

In addition, Aalia also regularly represents PSC in the inter-club league as reported elsewhere in this newsletter. PSC's squash league guru Malcolm Jensen agrees that if you watch her play you can easily see why she was named an "All-American," adding that she "has routinely crushed her opponents" in the league. Aalia always conducts herself with the highest level of sportsmanship and poise like no other. Congratulations, Aalia on being named "All-American"!

Jahangir Wins Men's 45+ (C) Title at World Masters Championships

The World Masters Squash Championships were held July 29 – August 4, 2018 at the MacArthur Squash Center/Boars Head Inn in Charlottesville, VA. The tournament attracted 752 entrants from 63 countries. The PSC was well represented with ten entrants, the most of any club in the world. In addition to Jahangir Naseem winning the Consolation round of the men's 45 + draw, Ross Campbell won three of his five matches in the 55+ and Jay Levy won two of his matches in the 75+. Also playing in their respective age divisions were Tawhid Nawaz (65+), Dick Gann (70+), Steve Weber (75+) and Charlie Gunn and Robin Pirie who both played in the Men's 80+ draw. For the women, Maureen Wylie and Ubu Grace Hoshizaki also competed. The next World Masters Squash Championships will be held August 25 -31, 2020 in Wroclaw, Poland.



Jahangir Naseem wins the 2018 World's 45+ Consolation

Member Profile: “Squash by Accident and Design” by Zia Choudhury



Zia Choudhury enjoys PSC’s club-like atmosphere in the lounge reminiscent of the Chittagong Club

My introduction to squash was by accident but I have played it for almost 40 years by design. I had heard of squash, a game that some mad men played in a kind of cage whacking a ball so hard that you could hear booming sounds from a distance. In fact, I had seen these courts in district towns in the northeast corner of Bangladesh where I grew up, but it was not until much later that I would be drawn to one such cage in the bustling port city of Chittagong.

I was a civil servant working for the Government of Bangladesh at that time and assigned to Chittagong as District Commissioner and like many other district headquarters in the Indian sub-continent, Chittagong had its colonial heritages, one of which was Chittagong Club—an icon of British days founded in 1873 where the elites gathered for relaxation and amusement, and were served gin and tonic by liveried bearers. The club, a cross between a Country Club and Gentlemen’s Club, had all sporting facilities including a squash court. The squash court was adjacent to the main building but separate with no air conditioning. It had a tin roof with cemented walls on four sides with steel grates on top of the walls meant for ventilation. The court would be hot in summer, but players seemed to enjoy this sauna of a court. And during

the monsoon the rain pounding the tin roof produced a deafening roar that made it almost impossible to hear the score!



Chittagong Club in Chittagong, Bangladesh

I visited the club often, mainly to play tennis. One afternoon I was looking for the pro for my scheduled game. I was told that he was in the squash court as the squash pro had fallen sick and he was asked to umpire a match there. I went to the squash court rather annoyed and intent on invoking my privileges to bring the pro back to tennis court to play with me.

The match was already in progress when I went to the squash court. Since I could not ask the pro right away while the match was ongoing, I sat in the gallery and started to watch. This was my first exposure to squash. I was simply fascinated by the speed of the game, and energy of the players. I was thrilled to watch each stroke and the skill with which the players shot the balls back and forth. They were dripping from head to toe with sweat but kept on playing with gusto. At that moment, at age 33, I became a squash convert. I did not chastise the pro for not turning up for my tennis game when the game ended, but politely asked if he would consider giving me some lessons.

I ended up learning the basics of squash in Chittagong from the squash pro (who actually was a teen age boy- the tennis pro's son), but only for two years. I left Chittagong for the USA in the middle of 1981 and had no access to squash for the next five years due to my graduate studies and, later, my new job at the World Bank.

My second life with squash was also by accident. After a few months of Washington life I was seriously looking for some sport. I re-started tennis but never came across a squash court until I saw a squash racquet one day in a colleague's office. Curious, I asked if he played squash and he nodded. Immediately I asked where, and he said there was a squash club just a few blocks away from our building. To cut a long story short, I joined the Washington Racquet and Squash Club at 21st and L Street in 1985 but it closed in 2002. Once again, I was without a squash court, but not for long. I was introduced to Potomac Squash Club by a World Bank colleague the following year playing as a guest and eventually became a member.

Sadly, although I have been playing squash for the last forty years, with an interregnum of a few years, I never mastered the game. Truth be told, I never pursued the competitive aspect of the game but playing has still meant a lot to me. I play it for fun, for the camaraderie I get from the other players in my club. So, if you beat me in the game (which is the case most times) do not expect me to be a sourpuss. I will smilingly ask you for a next squash date. Vive le squash!

“Follow Your Dream”: PSC Hosts Special “Squash Bond” Event

Peace and understanding through squash, two kids at a time - what could be better? PSC was the host on May 2, 2018 to some great squash and a presentation from SquashBond, an organization that brings together Arab and Israeli kids from all walks of their societies to learn life skills and athletic skills, camaraderie, respect and sportsmanship through the vehicle of squash. SquashBond is NOT a political organization nor does it have a political message. It has only a people-to-people message for peace and understanding and peace through squash, two kids at a time, as described on their website, www.squashbond.org Sara Bamberger, a former Yale Varsity squash player who helped found SquashBond and is a member of its Board, came to our club to play with some of our members, and gave a talk about the wonderful work the Squashbond is doing. As you can see, a good time was had by all.



Shahid Hussain, Sara Bamberger from SquashBond, Aalia Husain, Nouran El Tourky and Bob Stillman, the PSC event sponsor, display the SquashBond tee shirt, “Follow Your Dream”.

LEAGUES: PSC Wins Division 4 Championships in Winter & Summer

Winter League, 2017-2018

Division 4

PSC finished in second place during the regular season in the 7-team Division Four League with an 8-2 record, behind a combined Results-Pentagon team which finished 11-1. Captained by Malcolm Jensen our team then beat Regency 4-0 in the semi-final playoffs behind the stalwart play of Anton Briggs, Valentina Della Maddalena, Mansoor Qureshi and Aalia Husain.

The finals on April 5, 2018 against Results/Pentagon resulted in one of the closest championship team matches ever. At #1, Anton Briggs won the first game 11-9, but then fell just short in the next three games, scoring 8, 10 and 9 points. Playing at #2, Mansoor Qureshi had four extremely close games but came out on top just once. This meant the Potomac Squash Club team was in a deep hole down 2-0 in matches. But then, as described by Malcolm, Valentina “crushed” her opponent at #3 in three games and Greg Rind “came back from behind for a very tight 3-2 match” to even up the match score at 2-2. Going to the tie breaker to determine the champion, it turns out that the teams were even in games won at 8-8. But in the second tie breaker, PSC won on points, 159 - 155. As Malcom explained, “Every point won by each of our four players counted big. Had each player lost one point that he or she won, we would have lost by the same margin by which we won.”

Valentina was the team’s MVP not only for her performance in the playoffs but, as previously reported, Valentina played all 12 regular season matches and, including the playoffs, had the most overall wins in the league at 12-2. Way to go Valentina and congratulations to our team!!

Division 5

PSC finished second in the regular season at 10-2 in the 7-team league behind Regency at 11-1 but lost to Chevy Chase in the first round of the play-offs when some key players were out of town. But it was still a successful season in many respects as many of our players had some of the best records in the league: Adam Lee was 7-0, Charles Anderson was 8-2, Samarth Chugh was 7-2, Otto Louis-Jacques was 6-2 and Jaro Vostal was 5-1. A very tough line-up indeed.

Division 6

Captained by Ubu Grace Hoshizaki, the PSC team took fifth place with a 3-5 record. Bethesda Sport & Health won first place at 5-3 in the five-team league. Key PSC players included Eric and Laurie Wenger, Robert Weinstock and Ubu Grace.



Greg, Anton, Valentina, Malcolm and Mansoor: PSC Division 4 Team wins the Winter League Finals at Results, Thursday April 5, 2018

Summer League 2018

Division 3

PSC fielded a Division 3 team for the first time in several years in the summer league, managed by Malcom. PSC finished the season at 5-5, good for fourth place in the six team league with Results taking first place with a record of 7-2. Key players for PSC included Valentina Della Maddalena at 4-2, Anton Briggs and Javed Jahangir both at 3-3, Mansoor Quereshi at 2-1 and Hanna Chaudhry at 2-3.

Division 4

The PSC team finished the regular season at 8-2, tied for first place with the Regency "A" team. In the summer only three players play, and for PSC Valentina again had the most regular season wins at 8-1, followed by Aalia Husain at 6-1 and Greg Rind at 4-1. In the semi-finals against Chevy Chase, PSC won 3-0, and then in the finals against Regency B the PSC squad cruised 3-0

to the summer league championship in a dominant performance with every match being concluded in three games. Congratulations again to our championship Division 4 team!

Division 5

Captained by Samarth Chugh, PSC was in first place with an 8-2 record at the time of this writing, ahead of Chevy Chase in second place at 6-4 in the seven team league. Key players include Ilias Nauman at 5-0, Basil Herzstein, Jaro Vostal and Adam Lee at 2-0, Charles Anderson at 3-1, Samarth Chugh at 3-2 as well as Tom Friedman, Malcolm Jensen, and Nanjan Selvaraj. Results of the playoffs will be reported in our next issue.

Division 6

PSC had a 2-2 record good for third place in the Division 6 summer league. Key players include Ubu Grace, Eric and Laurie Wenger, and Maureen Wylie.

Our Pro's suggestion

Lessons & Clinics

Jahangir Naseem, Nouran El Torky and Noshawan Khan are working to design our clinics and lessons to better fit the members' needs.

We are here to work with you at free clinics and Play-the-Pro sessions to sharpen those hard rails and tune your drop shots. We want to provide you with the proper practice sessions to improve your techniques of the game.

Beginner/Intermediate Players (between 2.0 and 3.0)

Tuesdays: 7:15 - 8:15 pm

We want to give you a firm grounding on the fundamentals of the forehand and backhand swing, on footwork, and on basic game techniques.

Intermediate/Advance Players (between 3.0 and 4.5)

Saturdays: Noon - 1:00 pm

We will advance to lessons on improving speed, and focusing on difficult shots like backhand volleys. In addition, we will talk about positioning and game plan.

Women's Clinic

Saturdays: 2:00 - 4:00

We will work on grip, swing, and footwork, and the importance of getting back to the T during match play. (Small fee for non-members).



Play the Pro

Sundays: 12:15 - 1:30

If you want to see how well you perform on the courts, we challenge you to play one of us on Sundays at Play-the-Pro. We promise to play you just one notch above your level and show you the secrets of being able to get to your "put-away" shot (hint: it's all about getting back to the T). *This is also a good time to play other players in a round-robin session.*

We urge you to attend these free clinics. Please sign up for clinics and Play-the-Pro on the PSC reservations site at least three days in advance.

"Sessions can be cancelled if no one has signed up three hours prior to the start time"

Lessons Will Help Your Game

If you want to correct a flaw in your game (and who doesn't have at least one?), if you want to be more competitive with your playing partners, or if you just aren't getting the level of exercise you used to, try some lessons with Jay, Nouran or Nosh. PSC and PlaySquash have established economical rates for all Club members.

Contact Jay for more information and scheduling a class.

jay@jahangirsquash.com or 410-905-6317

Upcoming events

September 28, 2018 – October 1, 2018 Men's Professional doubles with a \$50,000 purse

2018 Maryland Club Open, Maryland Club in Baltimore

USSRA SDA Pro Tour - \$50,000

October 5, 2018 - October 6, 2018 **Squash On Fire: Grand Prix #1**

Open amateur skill group for adults at Squash on Fire in Washington DC

October 13, 2018 – October 14, 2018 **2018 U.S. Squash Skill Level Championships**

Drexel University in Philadelphia

October 19, 2018 – October 21, 2018 **2018 Squash On Fire Junior Gold**

Squash on Fire, Washington, DC

November 9, 2018 – November 11, 2018

2018 U.S. Women's Team Championships (Howe Cup)

Philadelphia Cricket Club

November 16, 2018 – November 18, 2018

Mid-Atlantic Junior Championships (JCT)

Meadow Mill Athletic Club, Baltimore

December 7, 2018 – December 8, 2018

Squash On Fire: Grand Prix #2 skill level tournament

Squash on Fire

December 15, 2018 – December 18, 2018 **2018 U.S. Junior Open Squash Championships**

Philips Academy – Andover

February 8, 2019 – February 9, 2019

Squash On Fire: Grand Prix #3

Squash on Fire, Washington, DC

March 15, 2019 – March 17, 2019

2019 U.S. Junior Squash Championships

McArthur Squash Center, Charlottesville

March 26, 2019 – March 30, 2019

2019 U.S. Women's and S.L. Green U.S. Men's Championships

Squash on Fire, Washington, D.C.

March 29, 2019 – March 31, 2019

2019 National Squash Masters Age-Group Championships

Squash on Fire, Washington, D.C.

April 5, 2019 – April 7, 2019

2019 U.S. Junior Silver Squash Championships

The Squash Club at Chelsea Piers, New York

Photo Gallery



Sergio Rosenzweig, Tom Friedman, Axel Kirstetter and Chuck Anderson



Jay Levy displays his footwork at the World Masters championships in the 75+ Division



Charlie Gunn with Joe Day from South Africa after their match at the Worlds in the 80+



Steve Weber elbows David Katsky in the ribs after their tough match in the World 75+



After a grueling match Peter Morse pumps iron with a pair of 50 lb. dumbbells