

“If I was in the draw, I’d be scared” Mohamad Zakaria Sends Warning Ahead of Upcoming World Championships

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For rising star Mohamad Zakaria, the 24/25 PSA World Championships mark more than just another tournament, it represents another opportunity to showcase his talent on the biggest stage. The World Junior Champion reached his first Platinum event quarter final in El Gouna recently, beating World No.6 Tarek Momen on route. The confidence he would have taken from this could make him a huge threat in what will be his first appearance in the main draw of a World Championships this year.

At just 17 years old, Zakaria is the youngest player in the men’s draw but has shown a maturity beyond his years so far on the PSA Squash Tour, becoming the second youngest male ever to reach the world’s top 20. A place in a World Championships at that age is daunting for most players but we don’t expect any nerves whatsoever for the Egyptian as he takes to the court in Chicago.

Zakaria is aware of how big the World Championships are and his earliest memory of the prestigious event is one from ‘The Warrior Princess’ nearly a decade ago.

“My first memory of the World Championships was from Nour ElSherbini’s win in Malaysia. When she hit that backhand volley drop and then the celebration was iconic . We all grew up in Alexandria and watched it together so that’s the stand out moment for me so far.

“What makes the World Champs different, is that even if you lose everything else that season but you win the World Championships then you’d feel like you’ve won everything.



Mohamad Zakaria in action.

Zakaria takes on Scotland's Rory Stewart in the opening round of this year's championships and if he is to come through that, a clash with 2017 World Champion and modern legend, Mohamed Elshorbagy. This clash would be the ultimate test of youth vs experience but Zakaria has total belief that he can cause upsets.

"I will never say no to thinking that I can win it. I'm improving all the time and with the way that I'm playing, I have the belief that at my best, I can beat anyone. It's just a matter of me improving and developing my physicality so that I can back up several matches back to back, but until it happens I will always believe that I can win.

“The first hurdle for me would be winning several big matches back to back to back. This would be like beating two or three top ten players in a row. This would give me the confidence that I can beat anyone and win any tournament.

“I have nothing to lose, I’ll be going all out and if I was in the draw, I’d be scared.”

Legend of the game Jahangir Khan still holds the record as the youngest ever men’s World Champion after his win 1981 victory in Toronto. Khan was 17-years-old at the time, the same as Zakaria but if the Egyptian was to pull off a massive shock and go all the way, he would break Khan’s record



“It would feel unreal. Breaking record has been my thing and breaking this record would be unbelievable. Jahangir won both the world juniors and world champs in the same year so if I could do that would be unbelievable.

Zakaria has already faced three of the current top four in the world on the PSA tour in Mostafa Asal, Diego Elias and Paul Coll. The teenager credits the leading pack with their ability to adapt during matches and thinks that this skill gives them the edge in pivotal matches.

“I think what gives them the edge is that they read the changes that happen so quickly in matches. They realise when something isn’t working or when something is happening in matches and they have so many weapons that they can utilise in so many different scenarios.

The 2024/25 PSA World Championships presented by the Walter Family gets underway on 9th May and runs to the 17th. With all action available to watch live on **SQUASHTV** and selected broadcast partners later in the event.