

# Champions of the future: the men

Richard Eaton asks four leading coaches which men will occupy the top 10 in the future

Though our experts – four leading coaches – suggest that the future of men’s squash may mirror the sweeping changes predicted for the women’s game in Squash Player’s last issue, they also indicate something much more extensive than would have been imagined even a short time ago.

Former Egyptian national coach Omar ElBorolossy, Malaysian national coach Peter Genever, Indian coaching consultant Major Maniam and English coaching consultant Malcolm Willstrop unanimously predict an Egyptian will be world no.1 for the next five years, increasing a feeling that a squash player might win only the second gold medal by Egypt at the Olympics in more than 70 years.

Not only does their majority opinion suggest Egyptians will be ranked one and two for the next five years, but also that they will occupy half or more of the top 10 places. This would be the greatest dominance by one country since professional squash began more than 40 years ago.

Furthermore, the four coaches suggest a major slump in fortunes for the country which created the game, with no English player in the top five in five years’ time for the first time in squash history. Indeed, our experts predict an even more worrying scenario for England, with only three of the 40 proposed rankings including an English player in the top 10 in 2020. A majority view suggests that France, a fringe nation not long ago, may have a better long-term elite future than England.

Other predictions include a German in the top five for the first time, a Chinese (Hong Kong) player in the top 10 for the first time, two South American players challenging for top 10 places and two 37-years-olds in the top 10 over the next three years.

## OMAR ELBORLOSSY



**18 MONTHS (mid-2016)**  
Omar says: “Mohamed (Elshorbagy) is at the top of his game, technically,

physically and mentally; Ramy (Ashour) has been the best player but struggles to stay injury-free for a full year; Simon (Rosner) improves continuously and reaches his peak by next year; James (Willstrop) returns fresh and strong from injury next season.”

### TOP 10

- 1 Mohamed Elshorbagy (Egypt)
  - 2 Ramy Ashour (Egypt)
  - 3 Gregory Gaultier (France)
  - 4 Simon Rosner (Germany)
  - 5 James Willstrop (England)
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- 6 Amr Shabana (Egypt)
  - 7 Nick Matthew (England)
  - 8 Tarek Momen (Egypt)
  - 9 Fares Dessouki (Egypt)
  - 10 Adrian Waller (England)

### THREE YEARS

Omar says: “Mohamed has the discipline and self-motivation to remain at the top; Ramy will keep winning big events but, due to injuries, not enough of them to regain (the) no.1 (ranking); Fares (Dessouki) is very dangerous and is maturing rapidly; Karim (Abdel Gawad) is talented and smart, and will reach full potential after working on physical fitness and mental toughness; Tarek (Momen) is

the fastest player on tour and will reach his peak in two years’ time.”

### TOP 10

- 1 Mohamed Elshorbagy (Egypt)
  - 2 Ramy Ashour (Egypt)
  - 3 Fares Dessouki (Egypt)
  - 4 Karim Abdel Gawad (Egypt)
  - 5 Tarek Momen (Egypt)
- 
- 6 Mohamed Abouelghar (Egypt)
  - 7 Marwan Elshorbagy (Egypt)

- 8 Mazen Hesham (Egypt)
- 9 Mathieu Castagnet (France)
- 10 Simon Rosner (Germany)

### FIVE YEARS

Omar says: “Fares will become mature enough to reach his full potential; Mohamed will remain fit and strong, but not enough to stay no.1; Mohamed Abouelghar is very talented with a complete game; Diego (Elias) is also a complete player who can go all the way.”

### TOP 10

- 1 Fares Dessouki (Egypt)
  - 2 Mohamed Elshorbagy (Egypt)
  - 3 Mohamed Abouelghar (Egypt)
  - 4 Karim Abdel Gawad (Egypt)
  - 5 Diego Elias (Peru)
- 
- 6 Mazen Hesham (Egypt)
  - 7 Marwan Elshorbagy (Egypt)
  - 8 Tarek Momen (Egypt)
  - 9 Ali Farag (Egypt)
  - 10 Lucas Serme (France)

## MAJOR MANIAM



**18 MONTHS (mid-2016)**  
The Major says: “Mohamed (Elshorbagy) will dominate, as

he has a very sound basic game and is in good shape; Ramy’s (Ashour) racket skills could help him regain (the) no.1 (ranking); Gregory (Gaultier) has a good foundation and will remain in the top three for another three years; Nick (Matthew) will struggle to remain in the top 10 after three years; James (Willstrop) is good enough to remain there for five years.”

### TOP 10

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  - 3 Gregory Gaultier (France)
  - 4 Nick Matthew (England)
  - 5 James Willstrop (England)
- 
- 6 Borja Golan (Spain)
  - 7 Peter Barker (England)
  - 8 Daryl Selby (England)
  - 9 Omar Mosaad (Egypt)
  - 10 Tarek Momen (Egypt)

### THREE YEARS

The Major says: “Omar (Mosaad) has good skills and fitness, and will move into the top five within three years. (Nicolas) Mueller, (Omar Abdel) Meguid, (Fares) Dessouki, Mazen (Hesham) and (Mohamed) Abouelghar are others who can break through.”

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  - 3 Gregory Gaultier (France)
  - 4 James Willstrop (England)
  - 5 Omar Mosaad (Egypt)
- 
- Next five (not in order)  
Nick Matthew (England)  
Tarek Momen (Egypt)  
Simon Rosner (Germany)  
Marwan Elshorbagy (Egypt)  
Max Lee (Hong Kong)

### FIVE YEARS

The Major says: “Tarek (Momen) is talented enough to climb into the top five within three years. If Simon (Rosner) is motivated, he has the potential to be top five in five years.”

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- 3 Omar Mosaad (Egypt)

- 4 Tarek Momen (Egypt)
  - 5 Simon Rosner (Germany)
- 
- Next five (not in order)  
Gregory Gaultier (France)  
James Willstrop (England)  
Miguel Angel Rodriguez (Colombia)  
Marwan Elshorbagy (Egypt)  
Karim Abdel Gawad (Egypt)

## PETER GENEVER



**18 MONTHS (mid-2016)**  
Peter says: “The rankings will be relatively unchanged. Mohamed (Elshorbagy) will stay at no.1, his pressure game and mental resilience

being the keys. The unfathomable Ramy (Ashour) will still be the world’s best player despite question marks about how active he will remain. Gregory (Gaultier) and Nick (Matthew), with bullying accuracy and knowhow, will still be eyeing the top spot with the illustrious Amr (Shabana) making up the best five. But, alas, the end of this golden era is approaching.”

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- 6 James Willstrop (England)
  - 7 Peter Barker (England)
  - 8 Simon Rosner (Germany)
  - 9 Omar Mosaad (Egypt)
  - 10 Miguel Angel Rodriguez (Colombia)

### THREE YEARS

Peter says: “It may be that four players will have left the tour. I apologise if I’ve cut short a career prematurely.

The vacuum will be filled by Simon (Rosner), who has power, attacking instinct and improving durability. Tarek’s (Momen) improving consistency against lower players will pip (Omar) Mosaad to the top five. Assuming Ramy is fit, the stage is set for an epic rivalry with Mohamed. Ramy’s numerous ways of winning points may trump Mohamed’s ability to prevent rallies squirming from his iron grip. Gregory will remain at the highest level - and with a touch more humour.”

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- 6 Omar Mosaad (Egypt)
  - 7 Mathieu Castagnet (France)
  - 8 Fares Dessouki (Egypt)
  - 9 Marwan Elshorbagy (Egypt)
  - 10 Max Lee (Hong Kong)

### FIVE YEARS

Peter says: “The top 10 is rampant with change as young Egyptians emerge. Mohamed is still the leading man, having refined his accuracy; Simon may be looking over his shoulder at a chasing pack of cavaliers; Fares (Dessouki) would be demonstrating impressive variety, confidence and composure; Tarek will have honed his crafty game; and (Mohamed) Abouelghar is another with huge potential, who will learn to construct rallies in different ways.”

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  - 5 Mohamed Abouelghar (Egypt)
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- 6 Marwan Elshorbagy (Egypt)
  - 7 Max Lee (Hong Kong)
  - 8 Joe Lee (England)
  - 9 Gregoire Marche (France)
  - 10 Diego Elias (Peru)

## MALCOLM WILLSTROP



**18 MONTHS**  
Malcolm says: “Shabana, Ashour, Matthew, Willstrop, Gaultier, Darwish and latterly

Mohamed Elshorbagy have been outstanding; finding replacements is impossible. Five of the listed players are over 30. Determining factors are injuries, age and inclination. Ashour and Willstrop have injury problems, so their recovery is important, Ashour because he is so young. Fit again, he could last a long time. Shabana and Matthew are older but still performing. Gaultier is 32, but his build is an asset.

Elshorbagy is young and strong and so far injury-free, despite a heavy game. His future looks assured.”

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  - 7 Tarek Momen (Egypt)

- 8 Simon Rosner (Germany)
- 9 Peter Barker (England)
- 10 Omar Mosaad (Egypt)

### THREE YEARS

Malcolm says: “Dessouki, (Marwan) Elshorbagy junior and Elias look well on their way. Rosner, Momen and Mosaad look capable of holding their places. Castagnet, 30-plus but strong and capable, should be at the height of his powers.”

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  - 10 Diego Elias (Peru)

### FIVE YEARS

Malcolm says: “Five years is anyone’s guess. (Mohamed) Elshorbagy cannot be ignored. Ashour, injury-free, is a doubt and high risk. Mazen (Hesham) looks promising, as do several Egyptians, and Max Lee is capable. English players come late, so Adrian Waller and Joe Lee might challenge, as there have been good signs recently.”

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