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Ian Marshall, Editor of Table Tennis Illustrated

Young Pretender



Zeina SHABAN in action at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games

Zeina SHABAN has in recent years been the player who has been the 'shining light' for Jordan in the sport of table tennis. A regular competitor on the ITTF World Junior Circuit, she played in the Liebherr World Championships in Paris in 2003 and in the Liebherr World Team Championships in Doha one year later. Furthermore she was the runner up in the Arab Cup in 2003 and in 2004 reached the last sixty-four of the Women's Singles event at the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004.

However, it seems she might soon have a rival to her supremacy in Jordan table tennis circles.

Eleven Years Old

A young lady named Raya might well following in Zeina's footsteps; she's eleven years old and is being coached in Jordan by the experienced Serbian coach Zoran DJOKIC; a man who is

extremely well qualified to give advice. He has a Masters Degree from the University of Physical Education in Novi Sad and was recently the head coach of the Indian national team.

No doubt Raya, who is currently attending the ITTF/ATTU Training Camp in West Asia where players from Palestine, Iraq and Jordan are present, will benefit greatly from the advice of Zoran DOKIC.

Professional

Similarly, Zeina SHABAN is currently under the guidance of a very experienced coach; she is at TTF Liebherr Ochsenhausen in Germany where Christer JOHANSSON is her coach and undoubtedly she is seeking to follow a professional career in table tennis.

However, Zeina will most certainly be taking a great interest in the progress of young Raya; not only may she have some concerns that the young pretender might usurp her position as Jordan's most illustrious player but also because she knows Riya rather well.

Raya is Zeina's younger sister.



Zoran DOKIC practising with Raya SHABAN (Photo: Roman Plese)