

Saudi International Squash Tournament 2007  
23-28 October, Al-Khobar

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[1] Amr Shabana (Egy) bt [2] Ramy Ashour (Egy)  
11/5, 11/5, 1/11, 11/9 (50m)



## *Saudi Showdown at Sunset Beach*

They don't come much bigger than this - the winner would not only pick up the biggest cheque in the history of squash, but would also become world number one come the November rankings.



At the start it looked as though the pressure might have got to Ramy Ashour, as Amr Shabana eased into a two-game lead without having to do anything special. Good, steady squash was enough to see the defending champion take a commanding lead, and the crowd, mainly supporting Ramy, were quiet.

They were given reason to cheer in the third. This time Shabana started with two unnecessary tins, Ramy took heart and the rallies became faster, more varied, more to his liking. 5/0 and Shabana soon realised he wasn't going to win in straight games, letting the game go once he was 7/1 down.

Shabana was back on court early for the fourth, keen to get back on top, but Ramy too was up for it now. Level up to 5-all, Shabana eased ahead in a tense finish. Reaching match-ball at 10/8, twice he thought he'd won it, before finally claiming the title for a second time with a drive deep into the back corner the left Ramy appealing in vain for a let.



So Shabana wins the showdown. He's still the champion, still the number one. Ramy is close, very close, but today was Shabana's. He earned it.



"Oh man, what a big match, so much at stake.

"You have to keep it simple as you can against Ramy, or he's going to eat you up. The first two games were good, I played simple, steady squash and contained him. I

could see in his eyes as he came out he was up for the third.

"It meant a lot when I got to match ball. I've been thinking a lot about getting to match ball in a big tournament, thinking about it for some time, it's been a long time for me. I knew I had to push, really push then, it might not come again ...

*Amr Shabana*



"He played much better than me ... I played well, but he was better.

"I was a bit loose in the first and second, I couldn't feel the shots, but I came back well in the third.

"In the fourth he had that mental toughness. I got close but he forced me to push myself as hard as I could and in the end he was that bit tougher, and he played better than me ..."

*Ramy Ashour*