

A CHAMPION RECOVERS AT ZARETT

By **Anthony Picariello**, CPT, Senior Exercise Physiologist and **Joe Zarett**, Physical Therapist, founder of Zarett Rehab and Fitness, Philadelphia

The top-ranked women's squash player in the country at the time, Amanda Sobhy, suffered a devastating injury while competing in the Ciudad de Floridablanca Open in March 2017. Sobhy fully ruptured her left Achilles tendon, requiring a surgical repair. After the surgery, Sobhy underwent five months of physical therapy in Boston. In October while at the U.S. Open, she came to Zarett Rehab and Fitness. After one session, she went back to Boston, packed her bags and moved to Philadelphia to spend five days a week for the next six weeks training and rehabbing at Zarett Rehab. This process was guided by Michael Troiano, DPM.

Her sessions at Zarett Rehab consisted of a high-intensity training session for sixty to ninety minutes, followed by manual



(l-r) Rich Wade, US Squash; Joe Zarett, physical therapist; Amanda Sobhy, Team USA; and Anthony Picariello, senior exercise physiologist

therapy and aggressive flexibility sessions performed by physical therapist Joe Zarett. She frequently finished with Zarett deep tissue massage therapists to keep her loose and flexible.

Sobhy was being pushed to her limits in a safe manner. Her workouts, designed by founder/physical therapist Joe Zarett and senior exercise physiologist Anthony Picariello, addressed every aspect. Their goal was to strengthen her gluteals and hamstrings

for a powerful push-off, strengthen her calf muscles to divert forces from the Achilles tendon and apply adequate stress to the tendon itself to aid in rebuilding a strong, dense tendon. Performed in a safe manner and supervised by experts, Sobhy's training regimen can be used by squash players of all levels to build strength, power and speed.

THE WARM-UP

- 10-MINUTE INTERVAL RUNNING
- TREADMILL LATERAL BAND WALKS 3 X 30 SECONDS
- DYNAMIC STRETCHING

Sobhy warmed up with a ten-minute interval run on the treadmill. She then performed a lateral band walk on the treadmill to target the hip stabilizing muscles, a must for any explosive athlete. Finally she performed dynamic stretching exercises to prime the muscles and tendons for the intense resistance training program ahead.

STRENGTH TRAINING

- LEG PRESS/TOE PRESS
- BARBELL ROMANIAN DEADLIFT WITH HEEL RAISE
- BARBELL FRONT SQUATS
- BARBELL LUNGES
- WEIGHTED STEP-UPS

Strength training focused on compound movements to ensure the calf muscles were working together with the other muscles of the lower extremity. All movements in squash are complex, thus requiring precise sequencing and explosive activation of many different muscles at a time. But the body is only as strong as its weakest link. For Sobhy, we chose exercises designed to put heavy resistance on her weakest link, the Achilles, to build the strength required for squash.



THE WARM-UP



POWER/EXPLOSIVENESS



SPEED/AGILITY

POWER/EXPLOSIVENESS TRAINING

- BOX JUMPS
- LATERAL BOUNDING
- VERTIMAX MULTIDIRECTIONAL LUNGING
- SLED PUSH/PULL
- SPLIT SQUAT JUMPS

Strength itself doesn't directly correlate to power. Power is being able to apply strength in a very short period of time. To achieve the power needed for the fast-paced action of squash, we at Zarett implemented high-velocity exercises for Sobhy, again targeted to her weakest link—the push-off motion.

SPEED/AGILITY TRAINING

- AGILITY LADDER
- SQUASH SHADOWING DRILLS
- RESISTED SPRINTS
- CUTTING/CHANGE OF DIRECTION DRILLS
- JUMP ROPE

The ability to quickly react to a well-placed squash shot can be the difference between winning and losing the point. Sobhy spent hours training her now strong Achilles tendon to be able to rapidly apply that strength on the court. She performed many calf-heavy exercises and drills aimed at exposing her repaired tendon to the extreme stresses it may encounter during a match.