

The Electric New Paper :

ATHLETICS

Courts dismiss Luan's case against SAA

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SAA's lawyer, Senior Counsel Giam Chin Toon, told The New Paper: 'It was found that the plaintiffs (Luan and Zhang) could not establish their claims, and there was no breach of contract on SAA's part.'

Some of the damages Luan and his mother were claiming include loss of education opportunities and future earnings.

In 1999, China-born shot-putter Luan, then 16, was one of several Chinese athletes handpicked by the SAA to come to Singapore under the Foreign Sports Talent Scheme.

Five years later, he was sacked by SAA for poor performance, and the 27-year-old filed a civil suit against his former employers last year.

He and his mother argued that SAA went back on its word by failing to provide him with education, training, allowances and a chance of gaining Singapore citizenship during his five years here.

They were also claiming loss of earnings and expenses arising from the SAA's breach of contract. No amount had been specified in the statement of claim, but the maximum the Subordinate Courts can award is \$250,000.

Court papers indicate that the sportsman and his mother had asked for \$500,000 as compensation in 2004.

In its defence, the association denied failing to fulfil any terms it had agreed with Luan.

Former SAA president Loh Lin Kok, who was in charge during the controversy, said after the verdict: 'Of course I feel vindicated that all their claims were thrown overboard.

'Their claims were not only unreasonable, but illogical as well.'

Loh also reiterated that he 'did not resort to irresponsible actions to lure Luan Wei to Singapore'.

- DAVID LEE