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Ex-shot putter loses suit

By Khushwant Singh

ONE of six China-born throwers, who moved to Singapore about a decade ago under the Foreign Sports Talent (FST) scheme, lost his suit against the Singapore Athletic Association (SAA) in a district court on Thursday.

Former shot putter Luan Wei, 27, wanted compensation from SAA for allegedly breaking its promises to him.

In the civil suit trial that lasted 12 days, Mr Luan, who returned to China after his dismissal, and his mother, Madam Zhang Ping, 55, had argued that SAA broke its word by failing to provide him with education, training, allowances and a chance of gaining Singapore citizenship in his five years here.

They also claimed loss of earnings and expenses arising from the SAA's breach of contract.

No amount was specified in the statement of claim, but the maximum the Subordinate Courts could award is \$250,000. Court papers indicated that the sportsman's parents had asked the SAA for \$500,000 as compensation in 2004. This was for what they alleged was 'five years wasted' by their son here as he did not receive any formal schooling and proper coaching.

Sidebar

Dismissed for poor performance

* Mr Luan Wei was recruited in 1999 by the SAA, then known as the Singapore Amateur Athletic Association. But after spending five years living and training in Singapore, Mr Luan, who became a permanent resident in 2003, was dismissed by the national sports association for poor performance.

* Through Senior Counsel Giam Chin Toon, SAA convinced District Judge James Leong that the conduct of the association was above board. In its defence, the SAA said that Mr Luan had failed to make progress to reach the standards required of him to participate in the Asian, Commonwealth and Olympic games.

*In coming to his decision, Judge Leong said that the evidence indicated that Mr Luan's case lacked merit.

He ordered the Chinese national to pay costs, which would be decided by the court's registrar if the parties are unable to agree on the amount.

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