

Ex-shot putter fails in bid to sue sports body

He claims it breached his contract but judge says case lacked merit

By KHUSHWANT SINGH

A CHINA-BORN former shot putter who sued the Singapore Athletic Association (SAA) for allegedly breaking promises to grant him citizenship and develop his career had his lawsuit dismissed yesterday.

Mr Luan Wei, 27, who was brought to Singapore under the Foreign Sports Talent scheme in 1999, claimed SAA breached his contract when it dismissed him for poor performance in 2004.

The athlete, who returned to China after his dismissal, and his mother, Madam Zhang Ping, 55, argued that the association failed to provide him with education, training, allowances and a chance of gaining Singapore citizenship during his five

years here. They also claimed loss of earnings and expenses during the 12-day civil suit, heard in a district court.

The total amount they were claiming was not specified in the statement of claim, but the maximum the Subordinate Courts can award is \$250,000.

Court papers indicated his parents first asked SAA for \$500,000 in compensation out of court in 2004. This was for "five years wasted" by their son here after he allegedly received no formal schooling or proper coaching.

He was one of six China-born shot putters recruited in 1999 by the SAA, then known as the Singapore Amateur Athletic Association. But after spending five years living and training here, Mr Luan, who became a permanent resident in 2003, was dismissed by the national sports association for poor performance.

Yesterday, SAA convinced District Judge James Leong that the conduct of the association had been above board. It said Mr Luan had failed to make



The Singapore Athletic Association had dismissed Mr Luan Wei for poor performance.

progress to reach the standards required of him to participate in the Asian, Commonwealth and Olympic games. Although he achieved a personal best of 17.17m in May 2003, his median distance for the five years here, based on his recorded performances, was only 16.38m.

On top of his inability to improve his distance to the target of 18m set for him, the association said Mr Luan also displayed a poor attitude towards training and failed to cooperate with a new coach. In coming to his decision, Judge Leong said the evidence indicated that his 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.

Neither Mr Luan, his mother nor representatives from SAA were present for the judgment. His lawyer Edmund Peretira said his client declined to comment. khush@sph.com.sg

MBS casino duo face three more charges

By ELENA CHONG
COURT'S CORRESPONDENT

A CASINO pit supervisor and an unemployed man accused of cheating Marina Bay Sands by rigging a Money Wheel game were charged with one more count of cheating and two counts of attempted cheating yesterday.

With the new charges, Keith Yong Kee-Hwei, 24, a former employee of the casino at MBS, and Tan Tiong Loon, 51, are said to have duped the casino out of \$31,500 in all.

Last week, the duo were accused of conspiring with a third man, a 36-year-old MBS employee, to cheat the casino of \$18,000 but the charges have since been amended to exclude him.

In the first fresh charges, Yong, together with Tan, is said to have tried to cheat by intentionally using his hand to stop the spinning wheel of the Money Wheel game. It was an attempt to achieve the winning result of a payout 45 times more than the original wager. The alleged offence took place at

4.01am on Oct 7.

About 20 minutes later, the duo allegedly cheated the casino in the same way and induced it to pay \$13,500 in chips to Tan.

The last charge states that at 4.26am, they again allegedly tried to cheat the casino.

Yong, represented by Mr Kelvin Lim, is out on \$30,000 bail.

His passport has been impounded and a pre-trial conference scheduled for Dec 2.

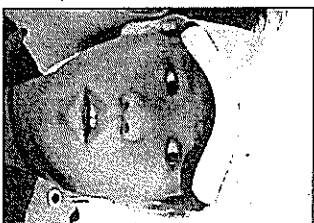
In Tan's case, he was denied bail as he had allegedly committed the cheating and attempted cheating while on court bail for 22 other unrelated offences.

Those charges accuse him of conspiring with others to dishonestly keep and dispose of stolen vehicles between February last year and March this year.

He was represented by Ms Kasturibai Manickam.

His next pre-trial conference will be held on Nov 10.

If convicted of cheating, the duo face a jail term of up to 10 years and a fine. For attempted cheating, the penalty is half that of cheating.



Yong is said to have used his hand to stop the wheel in the Money Wheel game.

At Vivocity, North Court from now till 24 Oct'10 (Sun)

the RETURN

Key man in loan shark op punished

A KEY member of an unlicensed moneylending syndicate, who issued loans totalling more than \$70,000 to about 120 debtors, was sentenced yesterday to 48 months in jail and four strokes of the cane, and fined \$80,000.

Ohg Soon Peck, alias Wang Shanbo, 33, admitted