



I HAVE NO DEFENCE

Joey Barton admits he has no excuses for his behaviour. B28



STUDY TIME

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B29



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YOUR SAY

- Footballer Joey Barton says he is "indefensible", speaking openly of his recent jail time. What's your take on him?

TO CONTACT THE SPORTS DESK, E-MAIL: stsports@sph.com.sg

PRICE OF SILVER

What Liu gets: \$4,500. What he turned down: \$6,300.

By LIN XINYI

A MONTHLY salary of \$6,300.

That was the offer that was put on the table for the man who helped deliver Singapore's first Olympic medal in 48 years.

National table tennis coach Liu Guodong yesterday revealed the details of the two-year deal offered to him by the Singapore Table Tennis Association.

Earlier this month, Liu rejected the offer, calling it "insulting" and "insincere".

According to media reports, Liu was upset by comments made by people on the Internet - who blasted him for being greedy and declining a monthly salary offer of \$8,000 - and felt a need to clarify matters.

He also disclosed that his current monthly salary is \$4,500. While it represents a 40 per cent increase, it is nowhere near the speculated \$8,000 figure.

He added that his remuneration package does not include accommodation and meals, and that he has to fork out rental fees of \$300 each month for his room at the STTA.

Asked to comment whether the STTA's package was a fair one, sports officials had differing viewpoints.

Said a member of the sports fraternity who declined to be named: "The question is whether Liu is getting the market rate."

"If he's not given what a coach in that position deserves, then I can appreciate why he feels slighted."

Last week, Singapore Table Tennis Association chief executive Chew Soo Sheng said the terms of Liu's new contract "were fair and incorporated a substantial salary increase".

But, according to a source in the table

How much others earn a month

■ National table tennis coaches in China: About \$15,000 a month

■ National table tennis coaches in South Korea and Japan: About \$9,000 a month

■ Top provincial table tennis coaches in China: About \$9,000 a month

■ Jan Poulsen (2000-2003): More than \$20,000 a month for his role as technical director and Singapore football coach. Helped set up Centres of Excellence for S-League clubs and the foundation for the National Football Academy.

■ John Dempsey (2004-2008): More than \$8,000 a month for his role as Singapore Swimming Association's director of coaching. Helped groom some of Singapore's top swimmers, such as Quah Ting Wen.

■ Top S-League coaches: About \$8,000 a month. Ex-Singapore Armed Forces FC coach and former national player Fandi Ahmad was reportedly earning that amount. He led SAFFC to two League titles.

tennis fraternity, Liu's salary offer does not match up to that of those coaching in countries which excel in table tennis.

"In China, where table tennis is their

national sport, national coaches can expect to earn over \$15,000 each month - inclusive of rewards and bonuses," said the source.

"Even coaches of provisional teams can earn about \$9,000 per month."

The Straits Times also understands that elite coaches based in Hong Kong, South Korea and Japan can command monthly salaries of about \$9,000.

Another sports official felt that the package offered already represented a substantial increase.

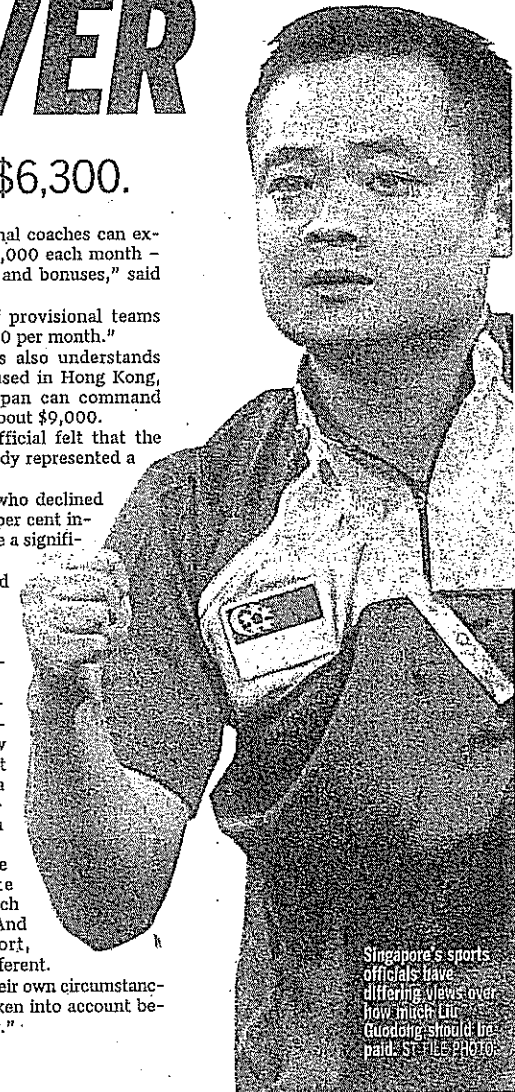
Said the official, who declined to be named: "A 40 per cent increase is already quite a significant raise."

"Yet having said that, \$6,300 for a coach worthy of winning you an Olympic medal does seem a little low."

Singapore Swimming Association president Jeffrey Leow however, felt that it would be unfair for a national sports association to comment on another, adding only: "There isn't one true market rate across NSAs. So, each sport is different. And even within a sport, each individual is different."

"Everybody has their own circumstances which must be taken into account before offering a salary."

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Singapore's sports officials have differing views over how much Liu (above) should be paid. ST FILE PHOTO