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Blood, sweat and fear

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Blood, sweat and fear

'Bloodsport' was gory. But it wasn't too far from the truth. Singapore's world silat champion, Sheik Alauddin, is toying with the idea of turning pro. But the final decision, by Jan 31 latest, depends on his wife. BERNARD PEREIRA reports

SINGAPORE'S world silat champion Sheik Alauddin is seriously considering a lucrative offer to turn professional as a free-sparring fighter in Thailand.

He said he was offered as much as \$150,000 for a win and \$15,000 to \$20,000 for a defeat by a Thai promoter.

However, the final decision will hinge on his wife's

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will hinge on his wife's opinion.

Sheik said: "The offer's really tempting. But I have to consult my wife, Saadiah, before I make up my mind."

The father of two added: "It's a big business in Thailand. Just like in the movies 'Bloodsport' and 'Best of the Best', it's a dangerous life to lead. But you are paid very handsomely."

Sheik, 27, known affectionately as "the Black Panther", said he had been in silat for the last 12 years.

He had gained a lot in experience, winning international titles and the chance to travel overseas. He won the world titles in 1990 and last year.

But he had to sacrifice much for all this.

Sheik said: "Very often, I've had to attend daily training plus take up two jobs just to make ends meet.

"So this pro offer naturally made me sit up and think hard. I must admit it's very attractive.

"If I agree to the terms, I will have to fight the whole

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year round. But look at the money that's up for grabs.

"Once I start making a name for myself, the money will definitely double or treble. Silat is just too small to compare with free-sparring (or kumite)."

WHAT SHEIK SAYS

At last month's world silat championships in Haadyai alone, there were several fighters who ended up with dislocated bones. So what more, free-sparring?

WHAT WIFE SAADIAH SAYS

I think all the money in the world won't be enough to trade for my husband's life. I don't mind him competing in silat because there is enough protective gear. But I fear for his life as a pro fighter. I have advised him always to stay clear of danger.



Tough guys: *Sheik (right) and Mewis know the risk of the pro league*

Picture/ **SAM YEO**

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