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Football-Youth

MALAYSIA TO TAKE ONE MATCH AT A TIME

JOHOR BAHRU, July 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will be more than happy to take one match at a time in the Asian Youth Under-19 Group 7 championship to be held here from Aug 1-5.

Chief coach Hatem Souissi said today that it is difficult to predict the favourites in an age-group tournament like the Asian Under-19 championship.

Group 7 comprises Malaysia, China, Laos and Singapore. The champion in the group will book a place in the Asian Under-19 championship to be held in Thailand in October.

The champion and runner from the Asian Under-19 championship and the third place winner will be the three teams in Asia who will play in the 1999 Youth World Cup Finals to be held in Nigeria.

Hatem said the Under-19 squad is also the backup squad for the present Olympic 2000 team.

"It is the first tournament for the team and none of the players have played any international matches. It will be difficult to predict the winners.

"Under such a situation it will be one match at a time for Malaysia," said Souissi.

Meanwhile, favourites China also played down their chances in Johor Baharu although they had trained for the tournament for the last one month.

Chinese team manager Li Xiao Guang said the Chinese trained in Guangzhou and only the best players were picked to come to Johor Baharu.

"All four teams have equal chances in winning the group. I don't think it is fair to say China are the favourites. I have not seen the other teams in action and it will be difficult to predict them.

"I saw that all the other teams have some well-built players. They have the height and physique," said Xiao Gunag.

The Malaysian squad: Jaafar Mohd Salleh, Azuan Mohd Karim, Mohamad Helmi Mohamed, Mohd Nidzam Jamil, Fahmi Isa, Isam Firdaus Sapingi, Mohd Shawal Johari, Akmal Rizal Ahmad Rakili, Zuraidi Mohd Lazim, Ahmad Amran Shah Ridzuan, Rushnizam Mohd Idrus, R. Nanthakumar, Mohd Fairuz Mohd Nor, Mahathir Mohd Jamal Mohd, Kamarulzaman Hasan, Kamarulzaman Yub Abdul Majid, Hairuddin Omar, S Jayaprakash, Eddy Helmi Abdul Manan, Fadzillah Mamat, Rafiz Abu Bakar.

Team manager: Datuk Mohammad Ali Hashim Assistant manager: Yusof Ali

Chief coach: Hatem Souissi Asst coach: B Sathianathan

-- BERNAMA

MKO DSR