

10/07/2000

Penang off to a good start

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PENANG Juniors yesterday carried the aspirations of former champions Electrical Switchgear Automation (ESA) when they beat another new outfit English College 2-0 in their MHF-Milo-NSC Junior League match at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil.

The win propelled Penang, effectively the reincarnation of 1996 overall and league champions ESA, to the top of the table. Parading seven former ESA players, they met some stiff resistance from English College, the reincarnation of another absent outfit Johor Sports Council (JSC).

The college's six former JSC boys spurred their less-experienced teammates to put up a fierce fight but Penang got the upper-hand when they opened scoring with a sixth minute field goal from Ahmad Hasbi Abdul Latib, a former ESA boy.

English College tried to follow suit and the pace of play was heated up with players from both sides getting aggressive and hitting the ball dangerously.

In the end, Penang proved to be the better ones when a barrage of attacks following a failed English College attempt gave them the space and Pragas Letchumanan, another ESA boy, scored in the 55th minute.

The result was hardly surprising as it is effectively a match between ESA and JSC.

Meanwhile, the MPPJ Stadium in Petaling Jaya saw another middle-ranked Tampin District locked 1-1 with new outfit Selangor State Development Corporation.

In Ipoh, former five-time overall title-holders Anderson were held to a 1-1 draw by Bukit Jalil at the Azlan Shah Stadium. The visitors took the lead in the 30th minute when skipper Wan Asyrizal Wan Mustapha converted a penalty corner to beat keeper Anderson Mahathir Thayin.

Three minutes into the second-half, Anderson made a quick counter attack to equalise. Mohamed Riduann Mohamad Nasir's first attempt at goal came off a rebound from keeper Mohamed Firdaus Razali and he slammed the ball in.

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