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TNB clinch it real early

Radzie Sapiee

TENAGA Nasional Berhad (TNB) lifted the MHF-Milo-NSC Junior League title when they beat Perak schools champions Andersonian 1-0 in their last preliminary match at the Pantai Stadium in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The narrow victory extended their unbeaten run to 10 wins and two draws, giving them a total of 32 points.

TNB are six points ahead of their closest challengers and last year's champions Old La Sallians Association, Klang (Olak) who have collected 26 points and have one more match to play.

Olak have been holding the title since 1997.

It was not an easy win for the power men as Andersonians came looking for a win and a passage into the semifinals.

The match could have gone either way until a TNB initiated attack in the 58th minute saw Kavalpreet Singh's shot blocked by Andersonian keeper Mahathir Thayin but Omar Hafiz Rahmat Ali pounced on the rebound and scored.

But TNB who needed just a draw to confirm their grip on the league title were only relieved when the final horn was sounded.

A relieved coach K.Rajan said he was in suspense until the match ended.

He added that the pressure was on them as the players were tired after Friday's match against Dato' Taha (Secondary School).

TNB came back from a goal down to beat Dato' Taha 4-1.

Rajan said it was a sweet win over Andersonians and the players deserved to be rewarded.

"We would share our winnings (RM10,000 for the league title and RM3,000 from winning 10 matches) with the players," he added.

TNB made their debut in 1998 to end second last but improved by leaps and bounds in the middle of last season to become the league runners-up and finish third overall.

Andersonian, on the other hand, started the season strongly but like the last two seasons fumbled towards the end and failed to make the semifinals.

Asked if TNB would make it a double by taking the overall from Olak Rajan said they would take a step at a time and concentrate on winning the semifinals first.

Olak, Penang Juniors and Bukit Jalil Sports School have also qualified for the last four.

In Malacca, Dato' Taha beat MPPJ 3-2 in another close encounter to finish among the top six.

They scored through Ismail Akbal, Norzaiful Rizal Saaba and Faharul Nazrey Harun in the 7th, 21st and 42nd minutes while MPPJ netted their solitary through Rashidi Abdul Wahab and Kumaran Basker in the 26th and 46th minutes.

In Seremban, Bandar Penawar Sports School surprised homesters Tampin District with an early goal to snatch a 2-2 draw.

Bandar Penawar who earned the whipping boys image last year opened accounts with a fourth minute goal by Izwan Hassan before Ali Mohaideen equalised for Tampin 11 minutes later.

Izwan who played in the Under-16 Asia Cup in Singapore sounded the board again in the 56th minute and Tampin was heading for a defeat when Mohamed Nafiri Nor put in the equaliser five minutes before the final whistle.

At the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil bottom-placed English

College held Kedah Sports Council to a 1-1 draw.

Kedah Sports Council took the lead through Faridz Hashim in the 25th minute off a penalty corner but English College snatched the equaliser when Hafezan Hamzah scored just before the breather.

Results: TNB 1 Andersonian 0, Tampin 2 Bandar Penawar 2, Dato' Taha 3 MPPJ 2, English College 1 Kedah SC 1.

All matches at 5.0.

(END)