

30/05/2001

Anderson's Selvaraju axed

Loganath Velloo

ANDERSON'S S.Selvaraju, who won the most skillful player award in the recently concluded Junior Hockey League 2001, was one of the four players dropped when the 18-member Malaysian squad for the Asian Under-18 Youth Hockey Championships was named yesterday.

Besides Selvaraju, his Anderson teammate Nor Azizan Abdul Rani and the MPPJ pair of goalkeeper Mohamad Mahathir Thayin and forward Ikmal Abdul Jabar were also dropped.

Four of the shortlisted five National Juniors players also made it to the final squad, with the exception of influential midfielder Azlan Misron who was injured while playing for the country at the Arafura Games in Australia.

Fifteen year old Bandar Penawar Sports School player Mohammad Shukri Mutalib was given the green light to withdraw from training as he wanted to represent his State in the ongoing National under-15 tournament.

The players looked tired in training after a strenuous three months of playing in the Junior League and team manager Poon Fook Loke is hoping that they will be able to rise to the occasion.

"The players are a very tired lot after a long season but everyone is fired up and confident of putting up a good show in Ipoh.

"Since we have not seen the other teams in action yet, no specific target has been set for Malaysia but qualification to the semifinals seems realistic," said Poon.

Ten nations will be competing in this year's Asian Under-18 tournament, which kicks off on Friday at the Azlan Shah Stadium in Ipoh, Perak.

Malaysia is drawn with India, Oman, Singapore and Brunei in Group A, with favourites Korea, Taiwan, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh and Japan making up Group B.

Malaysia open their campaign with a match against the Omanis on Friday.

The Malaysian squad: Goalkeepers - Mohamed Firdaus Razali, Mohammad Fitri Abdul Aziz, Defenders - Norhisham Shaari, Zarit Zainal, Abdul Shukor Adam, Engku Abdul Malek Mohamad. Midfielders - Abbas Nekmat, M.Jivan Mohan (captain), P.Prabahkaran, Mohamed Supian Mohammad. Forwards - Mohamed Fairus Hamsani, Mohamed Izwan Hassan, Mohamad Fakhrulrazi Baharudin, Mohamed Redzuan Nasir, Kamaruddin Rahman, Mohamed Shahrul Nabil Abdulah, K.Mano Raj, JR Shakaravathy.