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Terengganu fail to clear final hurdle

Anderson 3 Terengganu SC 1

TERENGGANU Sports Council needed to win by five goals to make the semifinals, but they lost 3-1 to SMK Anderson in the final pool B match of the MHF-Milo-Admiral-NSC Junior Hockey League at the Tun Razak Stadium yesterday.

But the win was not enough for Anderson too, who lost the second semi-final spot to Malaysia Sports School on goal difference.

Malaysia Sports School coach V. Muraleedharan, who brought his team to watch the match yesterday, heaved a sigh of relief but has the mammoth task of planning for the match against Group A champions Tenaga Nasional Bhd.

Tenaga, who finished their League fixtures by winning all 10 matches and scoring 56 goals, conceded only one.

"The odds are heavily stacked against Malaysia Sports School, but I have two days to plan my strategy and motivate the boys. Anything can happen in junior hockey," said Muraleedharan yesterday.

Malaysia Sports School have lost two players to national duty and without Fakhrulrazi Baharuddin and Fikri Bassar, their penalty corner department has been weakened.

"But Tenaga are in the same boat as they will not have Riduan Nasir and Azlan Misron who left with the national team on Monday for Test matches in Korea. So the match can go either way," said Muraleedharan.

Malaysia Sports School also lost S. Selvaraju, a penalty corner flicker, to a red card in the middle of the League. Although Selvaraju would have only received a one-match suspension from the Malaysia Hockey Federation, Malaysia Sports School benched him for the entire League as a disciplinary measure.

Yesterday, the Anderson hero was 16-year-old Fazreen Eksan Wahab who nailed a hat-trick in the 11th, 35th and 57th minutes.

The Terengganu goal was scored by Mahathir Fitri in the 27th minute.

Anderson, who finished third in Group B, only conceded six goals in 10 matches, but their scoring rate was only 23 because they met a full strength Taiping District early in the League and could only score six goals against them.

Malaysia Sports School hammered Taiping 13-0, and it helped them squeeze into the semi-finals.

Tomorrow (1st leg semifinals): Tenaga Nasional Bhd v Malaysia Sports School (Kuala Lumpur Hockey Stadium, 5.15pm); Ipoh City Council v Telekom Pahang (Azlan Shah Stadium 1, 8pm).