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SRAM secures RM500,000 deal

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THE SRA of Malaysia (SRAM) received another financial boost when they secured a three-year sponsorship deal worth RM500,000 from a corporate company to support its senior players to compete and train abroad.

SRAM acting president Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir, who held back the name of the company, said that the deal came about through the efforts of Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein in order to rescue SRAM from its financial constraints.

"Our development and elite training programmes are expanding and we need about RM2 million annually but we were short of RM800,000. The sponsorship deal was a timely boost," said Mokhzani in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

"Our request for financial aid was given due to consideration by the Sports Minister and the sponsorship has become reality through his efforts.

"However, we still need the extra funds to run our annual programmes. We will continue to approach potential sponsors."

Details of the sponsorship and who the sponsors are known next week.

Funds from the three-year sponsorship will be for the national senior players' involvement in tournaments abroad and also to aid Ong Beng Hee and Azlan Iskandar's training under Neil Harvey in Chingford, London.

The ultimate aim of SRAM is to produce world beaters under the programme which means special attention must be given to Ong, Azlan and Nicol in order to achieve the target.

SRAM has been utilising the annual funding from its Rakan Sukan partners (partners in sport) YTL Corporation worth RM500,000 on the senior players although the sponsorship was only meant for development.

The current sponsorship means that the development programme will be the big winners.

Sports equipment dealers Mulpha Sports, sole distributors for racquet brands Head and Gosen, has also pledged to sponsor the Penang Squash Academy which will be launched at the Penang International Squash Centre in October.

The academy was supposed to have kicked off early this year but was delayed to financial constraints. Mulpha's pledge has given SRAM further assistance to expand development at State level.

Besides this, Mulpha will also continue to be the main sponsors of the Malaysian Men's and Women's Open Championships beginning this year.

"Organising squash tournaments is not very expensive and we are glad that Mulpha had made it possible to revive the Malaysian Women's Open after a lapse of four years," said Mokhzani.

"I hope with the support of the sponsors, we can host more tournaments in Kuala Lumpur."

SRAM's financial woes appear to be over and but it remains to be seen if they can use the funds to produce more players of Ong and Nicol's calibre.