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A tight, fiery affair

Tenaga's Jang faces off against Maybank's Razie in MHL opener

By K.M. BOOPATHY

PETALING JAYA: South Korean Jang Jong-hyun and Malaysia's Razie Rahim used to battle regularly on the international stage but the penalty corner specialists will hold the key to Tenaga Nasional and Maybank respectively in their crucial Malaysian Hockey League (MHL) opening match today.

Jong-hyun, who started playing in the MHL in 2016, has scored a mammoth 144 goals in six seasons.

He was a regular with Terengganu and played one season for Kuala Lumpur Hockey Club (KLHC) in 2018 and Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) in 2019.

The 40-year-old defender from Seoul, who only missed the 2021 and 2022 seasons, has played five times for Terengganu, mastering their treble last year, but has been scooped up by Norsaufi Zaini's Tenaga this year.

He was MHL's top scorer several times – in 2016 (18 goals), 2017 (37), 2019 (21), 2020 (23) and slammed in 29 for Terengganu last season.

During the same period, the 36-year-old Razie may not boast such a prolific record but has slammed in 95 goals in eight seasons.

Maybank team manager Zamzam Mohd Ali is hopeful that Razie, playing in his third season for the club, will continue his scoring prowess in their objective to win the league and TNB Cup



Penalty corner specialists: Terengganu's Jang Jong-hyun (right) and Maybank's Razie Rahim in action during the Malaysian Hockey League match at National Hockey Stadium last year.

double after 30 years.

Wallace Tan was at the helm when Maybank last won the double in 1994 and their last success was defending the league title in 1995.

Tenaga, with 13 international players in their squad, will start as the favourites against Maybank in Bukit Jalil today but Zamzam has not thrown in the towel.

"We have not won the double since 1994 and that is our objective although on paper, Tenaga look formidable," said Zamzam.

"However, it will be different on the pitch and the first match is crucial. We need to take our chances.

"It will definitely be a contest between the two drag flickers and we hope that Razie can do the job for us, not just in this match but perform consistently in the MHL.

"Jong-hyun is a top class drag flicker and need to be wary of him during the set pieces."

Saiful, after losing out to Terengganu in the Charity Shield, the league and the TNB Cup chase,

feels Jong-hyun is the buy of the season for Tenaga in their attempt to win silverware.

He said the return of Tenaga's former players Shello Silverius and Marhan Jalil and the presence of Jong-hyun will add strength to their side.

"Jong-hyun is one of best drag flickers in the world and is known for his accurate long passes and in giving plenty of attacking options for us," said Saiful.

"The team will gain a lot from his presence and it's a good oppor-

MALAYSIAN HOCKEY LEAGUE

■ TODAY'S FIXTURES

- YOUNG ELEPHANTS vs UITM** (5pm)
(Wisma Belia, Kuantan)
- LIAONING vs T'BOLTS** (6pm)
(National Hockey Stadium 1, Bkt Jalil)
- MAYBANK vs TENAGA** (6pm)
(National Hockey Stadium 2, Bkt Jalil)
- NURINSAFI vs A. FORCES** (6pm)
(Bertam, Penang)
- JM ANTBEES vs KL CITY** (8pm)
(Bertam, Penang)

FACT FILE

Name: Jang Jong-hyun
Age: 40
Position: Defender
Country: South Korea
International caps: 333
Current MHL team: Tenaga Nasional
Goals in MHL (2016-2023): 144

Name: Razie Rahim
Age: 36
Position: Defender
Country: Malaysia
International caps: 330
Current MHL team: Maybank
Goals in MHL (2016-2023): 95

tunity for the young players to learn from him.

"With our former players Marhan and Shello also returning, we are ready for our first two games and also the Charity Shield match against Terengganu on Feb 7."

With the MHL opting just one-off matches among the 11 teams in the league, victory will be crucial for both Tenaga and Maybank to keep their hopes alive.

And both teams will be hoping for their talisman Jong-hyun and Razie firing from all cylinders in the Bukit Jalil today.