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## Syafiq turns on the heat for Tenaga with last-minute equaliser

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Tenaga Nasional were banking on their new recruit Jang Jong-hyun to strike but it was their evergreen Syed Syafiq Syed Mohd Cholan who came to their rescue in an explosive 3-3 draw against Maybank in the Malaysian Hockey League (MHL) opener yesterday.

The penalty corner contest anticipated between South Korean Jong-hyun and Maybank's Razie Rahim didn't materialise as both fired blanks but defender Syafiq scored a brace in the 41st and 44th minutes to drag Tenaga back into the match after trailing 0-3 in the first half at the National Hockey Stadium (Pitch 2) in Bukit Jalil.

Razie scored the first goal through a penalty stroke in the fifth minute and two more came through captain Najmi Farizal Jazlan (14th) and Syafiq Ikhmal Daniel Suzaini (26th).

The 0-3 jolted Tenaga but Syafiq revived hope when he scored the first goal through a penalty stroke and converted a penalty corner to reduce the deficit to 2-3.

As pressure mounted, the bankers started to lose their cool and it saw Najmi

TNB MHL MALAYSIA HOCKEY LEAGUE RESULTS			
Y. ELEPHANTS	0	UITM	2
LIAONING	1	THUNDERBOLTS	2
MAYBANK	3	TENAGA	3
NURINSAFI	2	A. FORCES	1
KL CITY	10	JM ANTBEES	3

receiving a red card in the 45th minute after a verbal spat with the umpire which further shook their resilience.

And Tenaga took advantage of the situation when Nik Aiman Nik Rozemi scored the equaliser in the 54th minute.

Syafiq said Tenaga were focused on stopping Jang-hyun and that had given him room to do his job.

"I've been scoring penalty corners previously but Jong-hyun is our main taker this season. So Maybank had their eyes on him and it allowed me to score," said Syafiq.

"We came to this match for a win but



**On target:** Syafiq Ikhmal converts a through pass from Muhajir Abdu Rauf for Maybank in a 3-3 draw against Tenaga Nasional. — CHAN TAK KONG/ The Star

turned out to be a bad day as we were 0-3 down in the first half.

"Every game is going to be tough like this for us but our focus is more on the Charity Shield match against Terengganu on Feb 7 where we must go all out to win."

But first, Tenaga will be looking for a victory over their junior outfit TNB Thunderbolts tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Razie praised the spirit shown by his teammates and said he had faith in the youngsters to fill up the vacant spot left by Najmi, who would miss the next game due to the red card.

"Overall, I'm happy to see the way we

fought against Tenaga and I feel we are not out of the league title chase," said Razie.

"Young players in the team have shown plenty of maturity and closed the gap with the seniors. This is a good sign."

Maybank coach Azrul Effendy Bistamam said his players gave away many bookings in the second half that disrupted their rhythm.

"We fought well but playing with one man down in the final quarter made it tough for us. The players also received too many cards and this is something we need to address in the coming matches," said Azrul.