

Headline	Defending champs SSTMI still in with a shout to retain title		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	05 May 2017	Language	English
Circulation	338,368	Readership	1,032,000
Section	Sports	Page No	58
ArticleSize	222 cm ²	Journalist	N/A
PR Value	RM 33,516		



Defending champs SSTMI still in with a shout to retain title

KUALA LUMPUR: The Tunku Mahkota Ismail Sports School (SSTMI) have not given up hope on retaining the Division One title of the Malaysian Junior Hockey League (MJHL).

The Johor Sports School have 16 points from seven matches – two points behind leaders Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) in the 10-team Division One.

Both the teams have two matches left to play this weekend.

Defending overall champions Bukit Jalil Sports School (BJSS)-Thunderbolt are third with 15 points and Pahang Hockey Academy (AHP)-MSP-Thunderbolt are fourth with 14 points.

MBPJ will face AHP-MSP-Thunderbolt at the Kuala Lumpur Hockey Stadium today before wrapping up their fixtures against BJSS at the MBPJ Stadium on Sunday.

SSTMI, who are gunning for their sixth consecutive league title, face Olak-Nurinsafi at home today before taking on SMK Datuk Bentara Luar of Johor at Batu Pahat on Sunday.

SSTMI coach Wan Roslan Wan Abdul Rahman admitted that MBPJ "are favourites to win the league title".

"But it won't be easy for them as they have two tough opponents ahead – the Pahang and BJSS teams," sàid Wan Roslan.

"We will go all out to collect full points against Olak tomorrow ... by which time we will know more about our chances of retaining the title. If MBPJ lose to the Pahang team, then it will put us in a good position heading into our last match."

AHP-MSP-Thunderbolt coach Muhd Sufian Mohd wants his team to beat MBPJ "so that we can finish better than last year's fourth placing".

MBPJ coach Mohd Harfizi Baharom is aware that both the Thunderbolt teams – AHP-MSP and BJSS – could spoil their chances of winning the league title.

"Both the teams will be out to beat us so that SSTMI Thunderbolt can have a better chance of retaining the title," said Harfizi. "So, we will take it one match at a time."



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