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Clash of the titans

Expect fireworks when Tenaga face Terengganu in finale

TNB CUP FINAL

■ MEN

TENAGA vs TERENGGANU (8.30pm)
(National Hockey Stadium, pitch 1)

3rd/4th placing

MAYBANK vs UTM (4pm)
(National Hockey Stadium, pitch 1)

■ WOMEN

M'SIAN UNIVERSITY vs LIAONING
(6pm) (National Hockey Stadium,
pitch 1)

3rd/4th placing

PDRM vs NEGRI SEMBILAN (4pm)
(National Hockey Stadium, pitch 2)

By S. SAKTESH

PETALING JAYA: Tenaga Nasional's hunt for a treble this season may come to fruition today but only if they can get past Terengganu who are ready to ruin the fun.

The two Malaysian Hockey League (MHL) giants will clash in the TNB Cup final for the third consecutive year at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil and the finale is sure to see sparks fly.

Tenaga head coach Nor Saiful Zaini admits that not much separates the two sides, and the margin for error is tiny.

Both teams ended the season with equal points in the league but Tenaga hold an edge on goal difference to keep their treble hopes alive.

"Most players in our team are national senior and junior players, and it's the same with Terengganu," said Saiful, during the press conference at the National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

"Maybe not all of them are in the first team but they go through the same training and play against each other often. So it is not going to be an easy match because they know each other.

"Only mistakes will separate the winner and the loser. I think that is how the match will go," he said.

Saiful added that the squad were fortunate to have avoided major injuries throughout the

season, giving them good reason to perform at their best in the final.

Tenaga captain Syed Syafiq Syed Mohd Cholan said Terengganu were their worthy opponents, after watching how they fought hard against Maybank on their way to the final.

"Game-by-game Terengganu are getting better and we need to have the best tactical approach to get past them," said Syafiq.

"We hope to avoid a shootout but if it comes to that, then we will follow the tactics and plan accordingly.

"We have targeted the treble and this is our chance to get it, we can't let that chance slip away," he added.

Missing out on the Charity

Shield and MHL titles this year, Terengganu captain Fitri Saari says his men are heading into the final as the underdogs.

"Tenaga are the favourites to win, so we will try to defend the Cup as best we can. It won't be easy," said Fitri.

"But we know where we are this year in terms of our preparations and the experience that we bring as a team."

Meanwhile in the women's TNB Cup final, Malaysian University (MU) are also eyeing a treble when they take on Liaoning today.

After ending a six-year wait to lift the women's MHL title, MU head coach Lailin Abu Hassan said the team are in full gear to get their treble.

"The players are in high spirits, but anything can happen in the final so there is pressure as well.

"Liaoning are a strong team with good fundamentals and their players are physically stronger.

"We know a few things that we have to do and hope our players can cope," said Lailin.

For Liaoning captain Wang Na, MU have defeated them 1-0 in the league, but the Chinese player hopes her experience in the Olympics will help the youngsters in the team.

"There are about four other senior players in our team with a lot of youngsters. We just need to guide them to focus on their own game and perform at their best," she said.



Potent strikeforce: Terengganu's Syarman Mat Tee (left) tries to dribble the ball past Maybank's Mohd Syawal during their TNB Cup second leg semi-final match. — Bernama