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MHL IN DISARRAY

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AFTAR SINGH
nstsport@nst.com.my

HOCKEY

MHL IN DISARRAY

MHC expunges results after two foreign clubs withdraw

THE Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) has been thrown into disarray after two foreign clubs withdrew from the second round of the men's competition.

China's Liaoning Province and Australia's Territory Stingers featured in the first round from April 11-May 17, but pulled out ahead of the second round from Oct 5-Dec 6.

Their withdrawal has reduced the league from nine teams to seven local sides, prompting the Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHC) to expunge all records of matches involving the two teams.

Former national player Maninderjit Singh said both clubs had committed to a two-window format.

High financial costs are understood to be the primary reason behind their decision to pull out.

Timesport reached out to MHC competitions committee chairman Datuk Anil Jeet Singh and chief executive officer S. Jayaharan for comment, but both were unavailable.

The sudden withdrawal is a setback for a league already struggling with competitiveness, where only Tenaga Nasional, Terengganu Hockey Team, and Maybank mount title challenges, while sides such as TNB Thunderbolts, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Armed Forces, and Young Elephants of Pahang struggle to keep pace.

The disruption comes amid a demanding domestic and international calendar. National players returned to MHL action after the Asian Champions Trophy in Hulunbuir, China, which ended on Sept 17.

The league will take a break on Nov 15 to allow national players to compete in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh from Nov 20-Nov 28, before they return for the MHL knockout stage from Dec 2-6.

Organised since 1987, the national league enters its 39th year with calls growing for the MHC to adopt greater professionalism in its administration.

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