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Eyeing perfect flow

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From social trip to serious business, Amirul hoping for call-up

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PETALING JAYA: Amirul Hamizan Azahar was invited by Shello Silverius to play in a social game at the Kuala Lumpur Hockey Stadium five years ago.

That was the first time the national centreback met Sarjit Singh and played together with him.

Amirul was in awe of Sarjit, who despite being a veteran, was a boss in the midfield just like his days as the national team captain.

Fast forward to 2024, the player fondly known as "Adu" is set to meet him again, but this time, he will be watched closely by Sarjit, who is now the national coach, replacing A. Arulsevaraj.

"I can recall when I played for his team in a social match. It was my first experience and I saw how stern he was on the field. He wanted everyone on their toes even though it was just a fun game," said Amirul.

"That was my only time I brushed shoulders with him and now, he is the coach. Just like his playing days, he will expect nothing less from us. He will be strict for sure as he will want the best out of everyone."

Amirul, 23, is one of the 46 players selected by Sarjit for series of open trials and the number will be trimmed down to 30.

The selection trials will be based on match-plays where the 46 players will be divided into three teams and will play eight matches against each other from March 19-30. The final 30 players will be named by Sarjit on April 1.



All pumped up: Amirul Hamizan Azahar (right) will enter the trial with lots of confidence especially after winning the treble with Tenaga Nasional in the Malaysian Hockey League (MHL).

Amirul said the new selection concept would test the players' characters.

"It is a huge pool indeed. Sarjit means business as he wants to ensure that he picks his best 30 for future assignments. For me, this concept demands a lot of commitment. The match-plays will be crucial.

"Even if you slack off 1%, you can be punished. So, I am going in

with the hope of getting shortlisted, that means 100% from me."

Amirul, who has won 40 caps with the Speedy Tigers, did say that if he gets shortlisted, he wants to stamp his mark and be one of the core players for the team.

"That would be my goal but first, I need to be in the 30. Once that happens, then I will prove myself to coach Sarjit. I know he

sees the Saari brothers (Faizal and Fitri), Marhan Jalil and Hafizuddin Othman as the core players but I wish to be part of that group too."

Amirul will enter the trial with lots of confidence especially after winning the treble with Tenaga Nasional in the Malaysian Hockey League (MHL) and will surely look to stamp his mark with the national team.