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Don't let Malaysia Hockey League die a slow death, warns Jiwa.
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We can't stick to this!

MHL's drop in standard alarms ex-international Jiwa

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: Former international Jiwa Mohan is concerned about the decline in quality of the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) this year.

He is also irked by the drastic drop in the number of teams taking part.

"The standard of hockey and the number of teams participating in the league have declined in the last few years.

"Last year a total of 19 teams competed in the MHL with six teams featuring in the Premier Division and 13 in Division One, which were divided into two groups," said Jiwa.

"But this year it is shocking to see only seven teams featuring in the Premier Division and not even one team registered for Division One this season.

"And out of the seven teams featuring in the MHL, Nur Insafi, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) and TNB-Thunderbolt are just making up the numbers as they can't match the other four teams like Tenaga Nasional, Terengganu, Universiti Kuala Lumpur and Maybank in the league," said Jiwa, who made his debut for Melaka Town Council in the MHL in 1999.

He added that in 1999, there were more than 20 teams featuring in Division One and Division Two in the league.

"In the past we had top clubs like Yayasan Negeri Sembilan (YNS), DeTas Yayasan Pahang, Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ), MBF, Royal Malay Regiment (RMR), Sapura and KL Hockey Club (KLHC).

"They fought hard to win titles but it's sad to see all these clubs have stopped participating in the MHL.

"The quality of the players and game was much higher than what it is today.



Still active: Former hockey international Jiwa Mohan (right) and New Zealand's Nicholas Wilson tussling for the ball during the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament in Ipoh in 2011. Jiwa is still playing for the Nur Insafi team of Penang in the MHL.

"Why the sudden decline in the number of teams taking part in the MHL?"

"What happened to the grass-roots development in all states?"

"Penang have started their grass-roots development two years ago and I'm in charge of the development in my home state," said Jiwa.

"Terengganu is the only state that has been actively involved in the MHL for the last few years and they did well to win the league, overall and Tan Sri P. Alagendra Cup titles.

"How about other states like

Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor, who have produced national players?"

"How are we going to produce quality players for the national team if there's only a small number of juniors playing in the MHL?" said Jiwa.

"I was only 17 when I played in the MHL in 1999 and I played against men who were far more experienced and skilful," said Jiwa, who represented Malaysia from 1999 to 2012.

"All states and the Malaysian

Hockey Confederation (MHC) need to find ways to start encouraging more teams and players to feature in the MHL.

"We had 30 teams playing in the Malaysian Junior Hockey League (MJHL) last year but none of these teams have registered to play in the MHL," said the 38-year-old Jiwa.

"I'm still playing for Nur Insafi in the MHL because I still have the stamina and I love the game. We don't want the MHL to become a veterans' league and die a slow death."