

Headline	Subahan refutes claim that MHL's standard is on the decline		
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FIXTURES MALAYSIA HOCKEY LEAGUE

> TODAY

UNIKL vs TENAGA NASIONAL 5pm
(Tun Razak Hockey Stadium in Jalan Dutra)

TERENGGANU vs NUR (NSAFI) 5pm
(Batu Buruk Hockey Stadium in Kuala Terengganu)

TNB THUNDERBOLT vs MAYBANK 6pm
(National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil, Patch 1)

Subahan refutes claim that MHL's standard is on the decline

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Hockey Federation (MHC) president Datuk Seri Subahan Kamal has disagreed with former international Jiwa Mohan that the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) standard has declined in recent years.

Subahan said the MHL is not dying a slow death.

"Our league is one of the most competitive leagues as you can see the number of top foreign players playing in the league," said Subahan.

"We have some world-class players such as David Harte of Ireland, and Robert Kemperman and Valentin Verga of Holland - who played in the World Cup in India last month - playing in our league.

"The Dutch players were supposed to play for their country in the World Pro League, which is starting this weekend. But they put the national interest aside to play in our league.

"Last year, the world's top penalty corner specialist Gonzalo Peillat of Argentina played for Terengganu.

"They won't be playing in our league if it was not competitive," he added.

He added that even national coach Roelant Oltmans also agrees the MHL is a competitive league.

"From the matches played, it can be seen that our league is competitive.

"For example, in the final of the Tan Sri P. Alagendra Cup on Jan 6, Tenaga Nasional, who are made up of all local players, beat a Terengganu side powered by six foreign players (2-1) to win the Cup," said Subahan.

On the question that there is a drastic drop in the number of teams taking part in the league, Subahan said last year six teams took part in the Premier Division, but this year seven teams are competing.

"The Division One is not held this year because TNB, who is our main sponsor, wants to come up with a new Under-21 league for all states," added Subahan.

"TNB wants to focus more on junior development in every state. We have to respect their decision as they are our main sponsors.

"TNB is expected to reveal more about the Under-21 league next month with the hope to have more juniors playing.

"By having this junior league, the national selectors will be able to unearth new talents," said Subahan.