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Terengganu on treble mission, but Tenaga won't switch off power

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By K.M. BOOPATHY

PETALING JAYA: Terengganu are bent on an unprecedented treble but Tenaga Nasional are not about to end the Malaysian Hockey League (MHL) empty-handed after their logic-defying escape to reach the TNB Cup final.

Tenaga snatched victory from the jaws of defeat when they came back from a 0-3 deficit against Maybank in the semi-finals on Thursday to score three goals in the last three minutes and eventually win the shootout 3-0 to contest the final at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil today.

Such heroics were never witnessed in recent times in the MHL but Tenaga captain Syed Syafiq Syed Mohd Cholan said the magical win has spurred on the belief that anything is possible in the Cup final which they will be defending.

Maybank had one foot in the final after goals from Razie Rahim (second and 22nd minutes) and Ashran Hamsani (42nd).

However, Azril Misron's 57th minute field goal and a double from youngster Amirul Haniff Mamat in the 59th and the dying seconds of the full-time (60th) forced the shootout.

Speedy Tigers Firhan Ashaari, Shahril Saabah and Azrai Aizad Abu Kamal slotted in coolly while Maybank's Izham Azhar, Shahnjie Irfan Suhaimi and Syawal Abdul Razak all missed the shootout.

To ensure the team retain the TNB Cup, Syafiq will be playing although he is still troubled by a left hand (metacarpal) injury that needed surgery three weeks ago.

"I'm not fully healed but I want to play and help the team to win the TNB Cup. We have the chance and the team spirit has brought me back to battle for the title," said Syafiq. "I didn't want my absence to put a heavy burden on my teammates and I want to do my part.

Tenaga coach Norsaiiful Saini was satirical as he said that the only way to beat Terengganu was by locking their influential penalty corner specialist Jang Jong-hyun in his hotel room before the final today.

"Jang is their key. I think we probably have to lock in his room so that he doesn't play the final. That's how good he is.

"His penalty corners are not very powerful but his placements are superb," said Norsaiiful.

"We have fought so hard and had to deal with so many injuries and



On collision course: Terengganu's Faizal Saari (left) and Tenaga's Syed Syafiq Syed Mohd Cholan (right) will square off in the TNB Cup final today. — Bernama

fought back superbly against Maybank and I think the boys deserve at least a title. The players believe they can achieve the task.

Meanwhile, Terengganu captain Fitri Saari had urged the team to achieve something they have never

achieved before – the treble.

"In our 10-year history, we have not won the treble. So, we need to wrest the TNB Cup from Tenaga to achieve our goal," said Fitri.

"We have a big chance to create history but we don't want to take

TNB CUP RESULTS S-FINALS, SECOND LEG

| | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|---|------------|---|
| UITM | 1 | TERENGGANU | 3 |
| <i>(Terengganu win on 8-2 agg)</i> | | | |
| MAYBANK | 3 | TENAGA | 3 |
| <i>(Agg 5-5, Tenaga win 3-0 in penalty shootout)</i> | | | |

TODAY'S FIXTURES

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| FINALS | |
| TENAGA vs TERENGGANU | <i>(National Hockey Stadium 1, Bukit Jalil, 8.30pm)</i> |
| THIRD PLACING PLAYOFF | |
| MAYBANK vs UITM | <i>(National Hockey Stadium 1, Bukit Jalil, 4pm)</i> |

Tenaga lightly. Terengganu coach Seo Jong-ho never believes in putting the pressure on the players.

"This is our last game and I want to players to enjoy. It's easier to achieve the result that way," said Jong-ho.

Terengganu beat Tenaga 4-3 to win the Charity Shield and won 3-2 in the final match of the league to secure their second crown last week.