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Tenaga bullish about thrusting Matador into submission

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PETALING JAYA: Tenaga Nasional have a good reason to be bullish about their chances of overpowering the dangerous Matador when they collide in the Malaysian Hockey League today.

Matador are now known as the "Pakistani team", thanks to their influx of players from that hockey powerhouse of a nation.

One player, in particular, has stood out. Sufyan Khan has set tongues wagging after scoring six goals in two games for Matador.

To gain the upper hand, Tenaga's defenders have done much video analysis of Sufyan and his compatriots and have a game plan to thrust the Matador into submission.

Tenaga captain and defender Syed Syafiq Syed Mohd Cholan said he has faced Sufyan several times before on the international stage and is aware of his capabilities.

"I've played against him in Malaysia's matches against Pakistan. He has scored against our national team a few times, so it's no surprise he's doing so well in our league," said Syafiq, who also works as a support unit executive in Tenaga.

"He is a first-rate penalty corner taker. We've watched a lot of videos on the way he takes his corners and our defence will have to be on our toes.

"We also studied videos of Matador when they played Nur Insafi. The Pakistani players have a higher skill level than Malaysians, so our marking must be tight to counter them.

"Many of these young Pakistani players are already playing for their senior national team, so that speaks volumes about their natural talents."

The 29-year-old Syafiq said that having up to six Pakistani players in the team makes Matador a side to be reckoned with.

"In the past, teams used to have about two to three Pakistani players. Now there are six of them in one team, which is a rarity. This, however, will make the matches more exciting and entertaining thanks to their skilful displays."

Apart from Sufyan, the other Pakistani players in Matador are Abdul Hannan Shahid, Abdul Waheed Ashraf Rana, Ahmad Shakeel Butt, Adeel Latif and Abdul Manan.

MALAYSIAN HOCKEY LEAGUE RESULTS			
MAYBANK	5	MATADOR	3
NUR INSAFI	2	LIAONING	1
FIXTURES			
■ TODAY			
TENAGA NASIONAL vs MATADOR (National Hockey Stadium 2, 6pm)			
TNB THUNDERBOLTS vs NUR INSAFI (National Hockey Stadium 1, 6pm)			
UiTM vs ARMED FORCES (National Hockey Stadium 2, 8pm)			