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UiTM wins title for the fourth time

University students shine as they emerge champions of TNB-Malaysian Hockey League Division One

BUKIT JALIL

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UNIVERSITI Teknologi Mara (UiTM)-KPT added another feather to their cap by clinching the TNB-Malaysian Hockey League Division One title for the fourth time after sealing a 3-1 victory against Politeknik-KPT (Politeknik) in the final.

Winning the match and title was a point of pride for UiTM – comprising all-local university students – after they were able to overcome favourites Politeknik who fielded four out of its five Korean players for the clash at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil.

UiTM took an early lead in the eighth minute through Muhammad Fitri Ismail, who came on just two minutes prior, when he capitalised on a loose ball in the penalty area.

Their lead lasted just a few minutes when Politeknik equalised through Mohamad Shazwi Rani from a penalty stroke.

UiTM took the lead again in the second quarter through a penalty stroke converted by Kavin Kartik Govindasamy.

Despite their best efforts, Politeknik were not able to find an equaliser and the closest they came was through Mohamad Shazwi Rani's penalty stroke that was saved by UiTM's goalkeeper Mohamad Adi Fazri Ab Rahim.

Politeknik's fate was sealed in the final minutes of the match when UiTM's Nor Azrul Abd Rahman scored another goal from a penalty corner.

UiTM had also won the Division One title in 2010, 2013 and 2015. "I'm very happy with the result. The team played according to the strategy after we studied Politeknik's games this season," said UiTM manager Ahmad Tarmizy Mohammed.

"We had a lot of confidence in our local players. In our first match of the season, we managed to beat Kedah who fielded their imports. For the finals today, the players were in the right place and they fought really hard on the pitch," he added.

Both teams were undefeated heading into the final, finishing the group stage with just one draw each.

Both UiTM and Politeknik were



Ahmad Tarmizy (second row, right) and UiTM players captured the TNB-Malaysian Hockey League Division One title for the fourth time after overcoming Politeknik 3-1 in the final. — Photos: M. AZHAR ARIF/The Star

promoted to the Premier League next season.

"It will be our third time in the Premier League, and we will start preparations early and try our best to get as much sponsorship as possible which will help us secure some import players in order to compete with the best. But for now, the next challenge is to try and win the President's Cup," Ahmad Tarmizy said.

UiTM's performance in the final earned them RM30,000 in prize money while Politeknik took home RM20,000.

Malaysian Hockey Confederation senior deputy president Prof Datuk Dr S. Shamala presented the prizes to the finalists.

"This season's league has shown strength in a number of ways, like the planning, the way in which it was organised and the improved

quality of play.

"One of the great things we saw this time was the way in which the teams prepared for the tournament, like their creativity in taking advantage of the student exchange programme and choosing to expose younger players to Division One.

"The league's competitions commission also worked hard to accommodate the increase in the number of teams this season.

"On the whole, we are happy with the growth this year and we appreciate that the teams were obliging enough to accommodate the busy calendar year, which includes Sukma, the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games," she said.

"Next season, we will continue to look at how we can increase the number of teams and diversity of groups."



Politeknik's Khairul Helmi Mohd Napi (left) and UiTM's Muhammad Taufik Abd Hamid (right) fighting for possession.



Politeknik's Oh Seyong (left) stumbling after being tackled by Kavin Kartik.



UiTM's Nor Azrul Abd Rahman celebrates after scoring against Politeknik in the final minutes of the match.



Politeknik's Mohamad Shazwi Rani (right) dribbling past UiTM's Mohd Khairul Ikhwan.