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Erratic Tenaga need more power against big two

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: Seasoned campaigners Tenaga Nasional have had a perfect start in the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL), winning all their first four matches.

And there can be no letting up. They have a 17-year itch to scratch. They want to win the league and double, something they last managed in 2003.

Tenaga have the people to do the job – they have 13 national players. However, they have yet to show the performances they are capable of as they even struggled to beat TNB Thunderbolt 3-1.

Against whipping boys Kedah-Nurinsafi, Tenaga played well only in patches to win 6-1 but against Maybank, they again struggled to beat the Tigers 2-0.

Only against Hockey Academy of Kuala Lumpur did they show glimpses of their class to run away 6-0 winners.

Their erratic form could prove dangerous against the likes of defending overall champions Terengganu and league champions Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL).

Tenaga face the east coast team on Wednesday at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil and UniKL on Jan 31. Between the two, they have a match against Universiti Teknologi Mara (UTM) on Jan 29.

Wednesday's match will be crucial as Terengganu had lost the Charity Shield match to UniKL 3-2 and will definitely be going all out against Tenaga to stay on track for the league title.

Syed Mohd Syafiq Syed Cholan, who marshals the Tenaga defence, said they have the strength in every department but have yet to play as an unit.

"Our team (Tenaga Nasional) have set a target to bag the double and we need to work really hard to achieve that as we need to show more urgency in our matches.

"We will face our real challenge when we face Terengganu and UniKL, who are powered by foreign players.

"We failed to win titles because we always falter against these two teams," said Syed Mohd, who has played for Tenaga since 2014.

The 25-year-old international said he has a heavy responsibility to marshal the defence and also score goals from penalty corners.

"We have to watch out for Terengganu's defender Jang (Jong-hyun), who is a good drag flicker. He was the top scorer in the league with 22 goals last year.

"And he has converted six goals in three matches this season," said Syed Mohd, who has scored three penalty corners in three matches.

"Our performances were inconsistent last year as we did well to beat Terengganu in their own backyard (3-2) but lost (5-3) at home.

"We hope we can play consistently good hockey to put pressure on Terengganu and UniKL for the league title," said Syed Mohd, who has 90 caps for Malaysia.