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NOT ENOUGH OF 'QUALITY PLAYERS'

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HOCKEY

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Negri, Terengganu again dominate MHL

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**A** PREDICTABLE men's and women's Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) came to an end on Saturday with Negri Sembilan and Terengganu Hockey Team (THT) winning a treble each.

And their challengers, Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UniTen) Thunderbolts and Tenaga Nasional, both played the bridesmaids in all three women's and men's title chase respectively.

Negri Sembilan women's coach K. Rajan said just by looking at the entries in the men's and

women's MHL, one could make an accurate prediction early in the season of the top two teams in both genders.

"The fact that there are very few quality players to go around makes it harder for teams who can't secure national players to have a winning chance in the MHL

"Negri have seven while UniTen Thunderbolts another seven national players to rely upon. And the fact that the National Under-21 were fielded as a team in both the men's and women's MHL depleted further the talent pool to choose from," said Rajan.

Even though Negri had won the treble, their HA secretary P.

Tamil Selvan said they will have to prepare a different strategy for next season.

"It looks like we have to make some changes in certain positions and register some new faces for next season as I believe all the women's teams will try to topple us.

"I noticed that every team this season played much better when they met Negri, as they wanted to prove a point and that's why we need to plan early to keep ahead," said Tamil.

Young Tigers and Tigress will next play in the Phnom Penh Sea Games, and they have to buck up, as their performances in the men's and women's MHL were well below par.

Both the Tigers and Tigress will later play in the Junior Asia Cup followed by the World Cup in December for the Tigers where they have been targeted to enter the semi-finals.

The Tigers also have the Sultan of Johor Cup to tackle before the Junior World Cup, and by their standard displayed at the MHL, the team looked "half baked" seven months to the KL World Cup.



Terengganu Hockey Team players and officials celebrate winning the Malaysian Hockey League after beating TNB at the National Hockey Stadium on Saturday. BERNAMA PIC