Only the TNB Cup can make Sapura happy

KUALA LUMPUR: Many teams would be happy with winning a title and finishing second in the league.

But not Sapura, who lifted the inaugural Tan Sri P. Alagendra Knockout Trophy and finished second to Terengganu in the Premier Division.

That's because, according to Sapura team manager Louis Gregory, their target was to win either the league or the overall title (TNB Cup).

"The knockout trophy is just a bonus. We're happy to have won it, but we won't be satisfied until we win TNB Cup," he said after the Cup draw yesterday.

As fate would have it, Sapura will face former champions Kuala Lumpur Hockey Club (KLHC) in the two-leg semi-finals.

In the preliminary rounds, Sapura lost 5-2 and 3-0 to KLHC.

Despite the two defeats, Sapura were still in the running for the Premier Division title until the final weekend. A 4-1 away loss to Terengganu dashed their title dreams and they ended up second.

Sapura coach Yahya Atan, who is handling the team for the first time, attributed that loss to their tendency to give away early goals.

"That has been our bane in crucial matches. We need to ensure that the team is fully focused right from the start. I believe we can beat KLHC," he said.

KLHC, who finished third this season after being No. 2 for two seasons, are also hoping for better fortune in the fight for the overall title. KLHC team manager Ahmad Annuar Sham Kamar said that they will not underestimate Sapura despite having beaten them twice this season.

"It's still anybody's game. All four teams have a chance," he said.

MHL 2016 — MALAYSIA HOCKEY LEAGUE

FIXTURES

TNB CUP SEMI-FINAL FIXTURES
(Matches at KL Hockey Stadium)

>TOMORROW

FIRST-LEG
TERENGGANU vs MAYBANK — 6pm
SAPURA vs KLHC — 8pm

>FRIDAY

SECOND-LEG
KLHC vs SAPURA — 6pm
MAYBANK vs TERENGGANU — 8pm

PRESIDENT'S CUP SEMI-FINAL FIXTURES
(Matches at Tun Razak Stadium)

>TOMORROW

FIRST-LEG
TNB-THUNDERBOLT vs POLITEKNIK M'SIA — 6pm
UITM-KPT vs SSTMI — 8pm

>FRIDAY

SECOND-LEG
SSTMI vs UITM-KPT — 6pm
POLITEKNIK M'SIA vs TNB-THUNDERBOLT — 8pm