

Headline	Greenhorns of KL City pip Young Elephants to TNB Cup spot		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	28 Feb 2024	Language	English
Circulation	175,986	Readership	527,958
Section	Sports	Page No	39
ArticleSize	152 cm ²	Journalist	N/A
PR Value	RM 10,902		



Greenhorns of KL City pip Young Elephants to TNB Cup spot

PETALING JAYA: KL City, with 19 Malaysia Games (Sukma) players in their squad, were expected to be the whipping boys of the Malaysian Hockey League (MHL) but instead, the minnows have secured a place in the TNB Cup after finishing eighth in the league which concluded yesterday.

They needed at least a point against a much stronger Young Elephants, Pahang's project squad and the favourites to win Sukma gold in Sarawak this year, and the city boys secured a 1-1 draw to achieve their objective.

Young Elephants drew first blood in the seventh minute through a Zamarul Hazim Ahmad Zamri penalty corner strike and held on to the lead until the 45th minute until Shahrul Danial Adhi converted a penalty corner to steer KL City into the TNB Cup.

KL City finished eighth out of 11 teams in the league with two wins and two draws for their eight points while Young Elephants were ninth with seven points.

The top eight teams in the league make it to the TNB Cup and KL City coach I. Vikneswaran, who is also the KL Hockey Association (KLHA) president, said he could not have asked for more from his greenhorns who are playing in their first national senior level competition.

"We were the only state team to play in the MHL and although we have 19 players from the Sukma, this is our chance to play against the country's best players," said Vikneswaran.

"We never expected anything other than exposure but qualifying for the TNB Cup was definitely an excellent result for us.

"Along the way, we also held Maybank, who have several national seniors in their squad, to a 2-2 draw.

"The boys also had the chance to play against one of the best penalty corner flickers in the world, Jang (Jong-hyun of Tenaga Nasional) and they're a bit more mature after this experience.

"This doesn't make us the favourites for the Sukma and Pahang and Perak are still ahead of us but we can play with more confidence."

They will play league champions Tenaga Nasional in the first leg of the quarter-finals at the National Hockey Stadium tomorrow where Vikneswaran will be looking for more valuable lessons for his team against a team full of national players and another chance to face South Korean Jong-hyun's array of penalty corner conversions.