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# A bolt out of the blue

MPBJ fail to get the point needed to win league title

We can still win the title although it's quite slim ... Our aim now is to prepare for the knockout stage.

- ZAINAL ABIDIN ISMAIL



By S. RAMAGURU

**KUALA LUMPUR:** It was a point too far for Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) as they fell to their first defeat in the MHC-MILO-NSC Junior Hockey League yesterday.

Needing just a draw to clinch the title, MBPJ were soundly beaten 4-0 by SSTMI-Thunderbolt at the National Hockey Stadium. It was MPBJ's last match. The title decider will now go down to the wire with the last league match on Thursday when Thunderbolt take on Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL).

MBPJ still lead the standings on 18 points from seven matches in the eight-team league. Thunderbolt are second on 16 points from six matches followed by UniKL, also on 16 points but with an inferior goal difference.

Thunderbolt, who needed a victory to keep their hopes of retaining the title alive, took the fight to the MPBJ side from the get-go.

The Petaling Jaya side were at a disadvantage from the start as they were without skipper Mohamed Shahiram Zali and Mohamed Asraf Zulzali due to suspension.

Thunderbolt showed they were not troubled by their first loss of the season — a 3-2 defeat by MBI-Anderson on Friday.

The match was only four minutes old when Shahril Saabah breached the MPBJ side with a penalty corner conversion to give Thunderbolt the lead. Mohamed Sufi Ismat and Mohamed Zulhamisan had chances to increase Thunderbolt's lead but muffed their chances.

Zulhamisan, however, made amends in the 30th minute, scoring a field goal to give Thunderbolt a 2-0 first-half lead.

Not happy with the lead, Thunderbolt continued to torment MPBJ.

They were rewarded in the 43rd minute when Mohamed Huzairy Zin netted a field goal.

RESULTS AND STANDINGS									
<b>DIVISION ONE</b>									
MBPJ	0	SSTMI-THUNDERBOLT	4						
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P		
MPBJ	7	6	0	1	11	9	18		
THUNDERBOLT	6	5	0	1	29	3	15		
UNIKL	6	5	0	1	28	6	15		
MBI-ANDERSON	6	2	2	2	10	16	8		
MALACCA HIGH	6	1	2	3	9	21	5		
BJSS	7	1	1	5	9	17	4		
SSTMI JUNIORS	5	1	1	3	6	16	4		
MSSP-USM	5	0	0	5	6	20	0		
<b>DIVISION TWO</b>									
<b>GROUP A</b>									
NUR INSAFI	1	MSS KELANTAN	7						
MSS PERLIS	1	IMAS PENANG	0						
ANDERSON JRS	3	SERATAS	0						
<b>GROUP B</b>									
POLITEKNIK-KPT	2	OLAK-PKT	1						
MSS JOHOR	5	SMK PADANG MIDIN	2						
TUNAS PAHANG	2	BJSS JRS	3						

Ten minutes later, Mohamed Azwar Rahman completed the rout.

MBPJ assistant team manager Zainal Abidin Ismail said they just could not perform due to the suspension of Mohamed Shahiram and Mohamed Asraf.

But he believes MBPJ are still in the hunt for the title.

"We can still win the title although it's quite slim. A draw between Thunderbolt and UniKL will give us the title. But we are not going to worry about it. Our aim now is to prepare for the knockout stage," said Zainal.

Thunderbolt coach Wan Mohamed Roslan said the defeat on Friday was a wake-up call for the players.

"So maybe the defeat was good after all. We now have a clear shot at keeping our title. But we will not take it easy and will be well prepared to face UniKL. The players did well to improve on their performance today and they will go all out for the title," he added.



**Great joy:** Thunderbolt's Mohamed Huzairy Zin (centre) celebrates with his team-mates after netting a field goal in the 43rd minute against MBPJ during their MHC-MILO-NSC Junior Hockey League match yesterday. — SAMUEL ONG / The Star