

Headline	Fierce battle between two great pals today		
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KUALA LUMPUR: Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) skipper Mohd Syafiq Zulzairin and Tunku Mahkota Ismail Sports School (SSTMI)-Thunderbolt top scorer Mohd Shahril Saabah are best of buddies off the field. But once they are on the pitch, they become the fiercest of rivals. UniKL will square off against double champions Thunderbolt in the last match of the MHC-Milo-NSC Junior Hockey League at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil today knowing that the winner is likely to walk away with the Division One crown. If they draw, then Petaling Jaya City Council, who have 18 points, will be crowned the new champions. Last year, UniKL drew 1-1 with Thunderbolt in the final league match and lost the league title to the sports school on goal difference. They also finished runners-up in the fight for the overall title when they lost 2-1 to Thunderbolt in the final. Forward Syafiq and Shahril have been the best of pals since they were 10 years old. We both lived and played hockey together when he was studying in a primary school near mine in Sentul, said Syafiq. He is my best buddy and we also represented Malaysia together in the Under-18 Junior Asia Cup in Singapore in 2011. Syafiq, however, said that hes prepared to put aside their friendship when it comes to the MJHL. I wont treat Shahril as a good friend in tomorrows match ... but as my enemy. Weve been waiting for the entire season to exact revenge on Thunderbolt, said Syafiq, who was named the best player in the MJHL last year. Syafiq, who has scored seven goals so far, expects a tense match as both teams will be going all out to get an outright win and lift the league title. Last year, a fight almost broke out when a Thunderbolt player hit his team-mate during a league match in Johor Baru. Quick action by both team managers managed to diffuse the situation. Itll definitely be robust match as both teams want to win, said Syafiq who, like Shahril, will be featuring in the Under-19 league for the last time. Second-placed Thunderbolt and third-placed UniKL are tied on 15 points from six matches three fewer than MBPJ, who have completed their fixtures. Meanwhile Shahril, the top scorer in the MJHL last year with 18 goals, said that he was happy and proud when Syafiq was named the best player in the league last season. He is my best friend ... we know each others game well. But tomorrow we will put aside our friendship as our team seek to retain the title, said Shahril, who is in the Project 2013 squad. Im not too happy with my goal count this season. Ive only scored six goals in six matches. I need to be sharper in the semi-circle if I am to help my team win keep title. For the record, UniKL, who made their debut in 2010, won the league title in 2011 while Thunderbolt have won it twice in 2010 and last year.