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**Intense rivalry:** Thunderbolt's Mohd Shaaril Saabah (right) will be leading his side today while his best friend Mohd Syafiq Zulzairin of UniKL will be out to upstage him in the winner-take-all Division One match in the MJHL.

# Friends and foes

## Fierce battle between two great pals today

By AFTAR SINGH

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) skipper Mohd Syafiq Zulzairin and Tunku Mahkota Ismail Sports School (SSTMI)-Thunderbolt top scorer Mohd Shaaril 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 Shaaril 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 he's prepared to put aside their friendship when it comes to the MJHL.

"I won't treat Shaaril as a good friend in tomorrow's match ... but as my enemy. We've

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.

"It'll definitely be robust match as both teams want to win," said Syafiq who, like Shaaril, 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 Shaaril, 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 other's game well. But tomorrow we will put aside our friendship as our team seek to retain the title," said Shaaril, who is in the Project 2013 squad.

"I'm not too happy with my goal count this season. I've 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.

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 <b>RESULTS AND STANDINGS</b>							
<b>DIVISION ONE</b>							
MBI-ANDERSON	1	SSTMI JRS	3				
MSS PENANG-USM	1	MALACCA HIGH	1				
	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Pts</b>
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	7	2	2	3	11	19	8
SSTMI JUNIORS	6	2	1	3	9	17	7
MALACCA HIGH	7	1	3	3	10	22	6
BJSS	7	1	1	5	9	17	4
MSSP-USM	6	0	1	5	7	21	1
<b>TODAY'S FIXTURES</b>							
<b>MSS PENANG-USM vs SSTMI JRS</b> (USM Hockey Stadium, Penang - 5pm)							
<b>UNIKL vs SSTMI-THUNDERBOLT</b> (National Hockey Stadium, Bukit Jalil - 5pm)							
<b>DIVISION TWO</b>							
<b>GROUP A</b>							
ANDERSON JR	7	MATRI PERLIS	0				
MSS PERLIS	4	SERATAS	2				
	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Pts</b>
MSS KELANTAN	8	8	0	0	38	10	24
ANDERSON JR	8	5	2	1	25	9	17
MSS PERLIS	8	5	2	1	27	14	17
KEDAH HA JR	8	4	3	1	17	6	15
STAR	7	3	1	3	6	14	10
IMAS PENANG	8	3	0	5	16	15	9
MATRI	7	1	1	6	5	27	4
SERATAS	7	0	1	6	3	17	1
NUR INSAFI	7	0	0	7	2	27	0
<b>TODAY: STAR vs MATRI PERLIS</b> (Sultan Azlan Shah Stadium, Ipoh - 5pm), <b>SERATAS vs NUR INSAFI</b> (Sultan Azlan Shah Stadium, Ipoh - 7pm)							
<b>GROUP B</b>							
<b>MSD KUALA LANGAT vs POLITEKNIK-KPT</b> (Note: MSD did not turn up for the match)							
SMK DATUK TAHA	10	SMK PADANG MIDIN	0				
MSS JOHOR	1	OLAK-PKT	6				
	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Pts</b>
KLSS	7	7	0	0	28	8	21
OLAK-PKT	9	6	0	3	27	10	18
POLI KPT	7	6	0	1	24	6	18
K. LANGAT	7	4	0	3	10	28	12
DATUK TAHA	9	4	2	3	32	12	14
TUNAS PAHANG	8	3	1	4	19	18	10
TUNKU BESAR	8	3	0	5	16	20	9
JOHOR HA	9	2	2	5	18	29	8
BJSS JR	8	2	1	5	11	28	7
PADANG MIDIN	8	0	0	8	11	37	0
<b>TODAY: KLSS vs SMK PADANG MIDIN</b> (National Hockey Stadium, Bukit Jalil - 5pm), <b>SMK TUNKU BESAR vs TUNAS PAHANG</b> (Tampin Hockey Stadium - 5pm), <b>BJSS JRS vs POLITEKNIK-KPT</b> (Education Ministry Turf - 5pm).							