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Star-studded Terengganu get green light to play in elite league

KUALA LUMPUR: Debutants Terengganu have been given the green light to play in the Premier Division of the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL), which begins on March 22.

Terengganu have managed to convince the Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHC) of the strength of their team by submitting their list of players.

Among the national players who will play for them are Mohd Shahrudin Nabil, Tengku Ahmad Tajudin, Azlan Mison, Ismail Abu, Jivan Mohan, Mohd Ameerullah Abdul Aziz, Mohd Fitri Saari and Khairulnizam Ibrahim.

MHC competition committee chairman M. Gobinathan (*pic*) said that in the past that they allowed teams like Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) and Yayasan Negri Sembilan to play in the top flight based on the strength of their teams.

"However this is not a blanket approval as the closing date for registration is March 2 and if we find that Terengganu have altered their line-up then they will have to play in the lower division. There are no two ways about this."

Gobinathan also said that the teams must register a minimum of 16 players by March 2

and will be given until March 15 to finalise their foreign imports which is limited to six per team.

The MHL will be played on a carnival-style format with seven teams in the Premier Division having to play matches in Ipoh, Kuantan and Johor Baru besides matches in Kuala Lumpur.

The seven teams in the Premier Division will play at home and away format are defending champions KL Hockey Club, Tenaga Nasional, Sapura, Maybank, Nur Insafi, UniKL and Terengganu.

Division One will also have seven teams in the fray - Tunku Mahkota Ismail Sports School (SSTMI), Bukit Jalil Sports School (BJSS), Sunday 20/30, SSTMI Juniors, MBI Anderson, Unitem and Uitm.

"At the moment it will be a one-round format for the the Division One league. We will discuss with the team managers in a dialogue on Friday on the possibility of playing a home and away format as well so as to enable them to play more matches," added Gobinathan.

The MHL will begin after the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh from March 9-17 with the final slated for May 12.

