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Juniors need something extra

STIFF TEST: PJCC vow to fight despite missing key players

JUGJET SINGH

TENGGU Mahkota Ismail Sports School (SSTMI) Juniors know that they have to produce more of the same if they are to advance to the semi-finals of the Milo Cup today.

They stunned Petaling Jaya City Council (PJCC) 4-3 in the first leg quarter-finals on Friday but the one goal cushion is not enough against a team who came so close to winning the league title.

PJCC only lost the league title to Tengku Mahkota Ismail Sports School (Thunderbolts) on goal difference after both sides ended with 18 points.

The main reason PJCC are in trouble is because of suspensions to their key play-

ers.

Khairul Shafik Kasim and Asraf Zulzali are not eligible for the quarter-finals after picking up demerit points, while Khairul will also miss the first leg of the semi-finals if his team get past SSTMI Juniors.

"The suspensions hit us hard as my side looked lost without the key players. Frankly, we were lucky to reduce the deficit from 4-1 to 4-3 with a final push to give us hope for the return leg," said PJCC coach Azlan Saufi Hafifi

"I knew it would be tough for us in the knock-out stage as the stakes are much higher. But we were slow in starting off the match and fell back early. Hopefully, my

players will play consistent hockey to bounce back in the return leg."

The other three first leg ties turned out to be one-sided affairs, and SSTMI Thunderbolts, Anderson and UniKL will have easy return legs after taking big leads.

Today — Q-finals, 2nd leg: KL Sports School (0) v Tengku Mahkota Ismail Sports School (4) (Ministry of Education, 5pm); Kelantan (1) v Anderson (5) (Terengganu, 5pm); Malacca High School (0) v UniKL Young Guns (7) (Bukit Serindit, 5pm); SSTMI Juniors (4) v Petaling Jaya CC (3) (Taman Daya, 5pm).

Note: First Leg scores in parenthesis.



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Petaling Jaya CC's Muhammad Farid Md Zuki (right) tries to get past SSTMI Juniors' Khairul Helmy Mohd Napi in their first leg quarter-final of the Milo Cup on Friday. Pic by Owee Ah Chun