

Headline	Gritty Johor sides out to make history		
MediaTitle	New Straits Times		
Date	27 Feb 2013	Color	Black/white
Section	Sport	Circulation	136,530
Page No	48	Readership	330,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	170 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	MYR 2,772
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	MYR 8,317



Gritty Johor sides out to make history

TWO Johor teams will be out to create history in the Junior Hockey League Milo Cup semi-finals today, but only one of the Tengku Mahkota Ismail Sports School sides are expected to make the final.

SSTMI Juniors will find the going tough against UniKL Young Guns in their first leg semi-final today, while it would be relatively easier for the school's senior side SSTMI, who will meet Anderson of Ipoh, in the other semi-final.

If history is to be used as a yardstick, then UniKL are going to cruise into the last four as they beat SSTMI Juniors 6-2 in the League.

And using the same yardstick, Anderson had beaten SSTMI 3-2 in the League to become the only side to take three points off the Johor school in the last three seasons.

But it would be foolish to judge the semi-finals, using history as SSTMI went on to win the League title, while SSTMI Juniors edged Division One runners-up Petaling Jaya City Council 8-7 on aggregate to reach

this stage.

Both the Sports Schools teams have shown they have gritty players.

"Even though we expected to meet PJCC in the semi-finals, and were planning to avenge our 1-0 defeat to them in the league, SSTMI Juniors sprang a surprise to book a date with us," said UniKL Hockey Club acting president Amir Azhar Ibrahim.

However, Amir cautioned his side. "SSTMI Juniors have come a long way since we beat them in the

League and they can challenge UniKL in every department as they did to PJCC in the quarters," he said.

"I expect them to come fully prepared to face the Young Guns as they also enjoy the vast experience and tactical knowledge of Tenaga Nasional coaching set-up as what their senior team had received.

"We are aware of that and will have the full squad (suspension and injury-free) ready for the challenge in the home leg tomorrow (today).

"We will try to capitalise on the

home advantage before we travel to Johor on Friday for the return leg."

SSTMI coach Wan Roslan Wan Rahman said that the shock defeat to Anderson in the League was nothing to worry about as the teams face each other with clean slates.

"That (the defeat) was when we were suffering from travel fatigue due to playing non stop as the fixtures were drawn up in such a way.

"Also, we did not have two key players who were injured then," said Wan Roslan.

"However, my side are ready for a home run as the injured players have recovered and we are fresh after a good rest."

TODAY — S-finals (1st leg): Tengku Mahkota Ismail Sports School v Andersons (Taman Daya, 5pm); UniKL v SSTMI Juniors (National Stadium Pitch II, 5pm).

FRIDAY — 2nd leg: Andersons v Tengku Mahkota Ismail Sports School (Azlan Shah Stadium, 5pm); SSTMI Juniors v UniKL (Taman Daya, 5pm). **By Jugjet Singh**