



Headline	Wake-up call for favourites		
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HOCKEY

Wake-up call for favourites

BOTH Sapura and Tenaga Nasional survived gritty fightbacks from UniKL and Terengganu to emerge 3-2 winners in the first leg of their respective TNB Cup quarter-final matches at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil yesterday.

Sapura, who finished fourth in the Premier Division, looked on track for a dominating performance after Muhammad Zubair deflected into the net from a Khasif Ali penalty corner attempt only four minutes into the match.

UniKL were awarded two penalty corners in the 20th and 24th minutes but team topscorer Mohd Noor Faez Ibrahim failed to convert either.

UniKL were left to rue their missed chances when a calm and collected Khasif got on the scoresheet with a low flick past keeper Shahrul Azaddin Auskarzie in the 34th minute to give Sapura a 2-0 lead going into the break.

Faez finally found his scoring touch and pulled one back for his side with a penalty corner in the 50th minute only for Khasif to get his second of the match nine minutes later.

Faez, however, kept UniKL in the running

for a second leg comeback when he scored a second penalty corner five minutes before time.

Sapura coach Tai Beng Hai said he was satisfied with the result but stressed that his charges need to be fully focused to emerge victorious in the second leg tomorrow.

"As you would expect from a first leg match it was a tight game with both sides being quite cautious," said the former national coach.

"I am satisfied with how the boys did. We have a slight advantage now but have to really take our chances well and kill the game on Friday (tomorrow).

UniKL coach Arul Selvaraj said: "I am a bit disappointed with my players as they did not move very well today (yesterday)".

"We could have taken the match today if we did (move better), however, it is only a one goal lead for them and we will do our best to get the win in the second leg.

Despite carrying a left knee injury sustained in Tenaga's final league match last Sunday, star striker Faizal Saari was deemed fit to start and played a key role in his sides'

slender victory.

Terengganu opened the scoring in the 24th minute thanks to a Mohd Amerrullah Abdul Aziz field goal but were soon brought level when Faizal, playing with a heavily strapped left knee, converted a penalty corner a minute before the break.

Tenaga added to their tally in the 47th minute with a well taken effort from Muhammad Azammi Adabi and a second goal from Faizal in the 61st minute to take a 3-1 lead.

Terengganu, however, kept their second leg hopes alive when Tengku Ahmad Tajuddin Tengku Abdul Jalil scored with a field goal just a minute later.

RESULTS — TNB Cup q-finals, 1st leg: Sapura 3 UniKL 2, Tenaga Nasional 3 Terengganu 2.

Presidents Cup q-finals, 1st leg: Sunday 2030 5 SSTMI 2, MBI 3 Uniten KPT 2.

Tomorrow — TNB Cup q-finals: TNB v Terengganu (National Stadium, 11 6pm), Sapura v UniKL (National Stadium II, 8pm).

Presidents Cup q-finals: Uniten KPT v MBI (National Stadium I, 6pm), Sunday 2030 v SSTMI (National Stadium I, 8pm). **By Fadhli Ishak**