



Headline	Sapura ready to give favourites KLHC a run for their money		
MediaTitle	The Star Online(www.thestar.com.my)		
Date	05 May 2013	Color	Full Color
Section	NEWS	Circulation	500
Page No	15	Readership	7
Language	English	ArticleSize	0 cm²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 380
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 1,140

Sapura ready to give favourites KLHC a run for their money

[Link: http://c.moreover.com/click/here.pl?z8747612129&z=1600249370](http://c.moreover.com/click/here.pl?z8747612129&z=1600249370)

KUALA LUMPUR: The usual suspects are through to the semi-finals in the battle for the overall title of the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL). The four teams Tenaga Nasional, Maybank, Sapura and Kuala Lumpur Hockey Club (KLHC) have, for the last two decades, dominated the MHL and sharing the title among themselves. Tenaga and Maybank, who meet in one semi-final, dominated in the 90s while Sapura and eight-time League champions KLHC joined the elite ranks from 2004 onwards. KLHC will start as favourites against Sapura as they gun for a fourth double in the series. Sapura team manager S. Kuhan said that the pressure would be on the champions and that it will help to calm the younger players in our team. They have the edge for sure ... they are the League and defending champions. Both the ties will be crucial but the first one is especially important as we have to keep the gap close. Our players must not be overawed by the champions, he said. Sapura won the League title in 2004 and 2005 and the overall title in 2005 and 2006. In the preliminary rounds, KLHC won both matches by 3-2 margins. The close matches will certainly give Sapura some hopes of snatching an upset win in the last four. However, their form in the quarter-finals against a speedy UniKL side, is a cause for concern. Still, with Khasif Ali in good form from penalty corners, Sapura may well have the weapon to get the goals. He is the leading tournament scorer with 17 goals. Man-to-man, KLHC are stronger and it will take some doing to beat them. But the Maybank-Tenaga clash is the plum tie of the last four. They are the only remaining teams in the league since its inception in 1987. Tenaga were the first double champions in the 1991-92 season while Maybank did it in 1994. Only then came the likes of Yayasan Negri Sembilan (YNS), Bank Simpanan Nasional, MPPJ, Sapura and KLHC. Tenaga coach Nor Azlan Bakar predicts a close match as both teams are familiar with each other and played each other on so many occasions. We play each other every year and have always be among the top four. So, we are always aware of the pitfalls in the knockout stage and we cannot take any team for granted, he said. This match is likely to go all the way to the return-leg tie.