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Time for a world-class keeper

CLINIC: MHC and UniKL team up to unearth new talent through a specialised training programme

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UNIKL Hockey Club and the Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHC) yesterday officially teamed up to save a dying breed in hockey — goalkeepers.

From the days of Khairuddin Zainal in the 1975 Kuala Lumpur World Cup, right until the present No 1 in S. Kumar, national goalkeepers have helped keep Malaysia among the top 15 countries in the world.

However, the supply of calibre goalkeepers has almost dried up, and that is why UniKL and MHC started a specialised training programme yesterday.

Led by former national keeper and current national and juniors goalkeeper coach M. Nadarajah, the training will be held every Saturday.

Yesterday, about 20 goalkeepers from ages 10-16 turned up for the official launch which also saw Kumar, former national goalkeeper Nasihin Nubli, national coach Paul Revington and his assistant Arul Selvaraj making their presence felt.

“We used to have some of the best goalkeepers in the world but today, even Malaysia Hockey League sides are finding it difficult to get good goalkeepers.

“And when Kumar and Roslan (Jamaluddin) retire in the near future, the gap between them and those who are likely to fill their shoes is just too wide.

“That is why, with the help of UniKL and MHC, I hope to train young goalkeepers with the basics so that when they move up to the

club and then national levels, they will easily fit in and there is no need to hire foreign goalkeepers for the MHL,” said Nadarajah.

Nadarajah, Kumar and Roslan will head for the Netherlands for the second time on Monday to undergo specialised goalkeepers training under Martijn Drijver.

The first was in November last year.

“In the Netherlands, Roslan and I learned how to combine the Asian and European styles in our last training. And it did help improve our game, so we are looking forward to the second stint,” said Kumar.

Kumar, from Tampin, Negri Sembilan, then parted his knowledge with some of the young aspirants, who later lined up for photo shoots with him.



(From left) Former skipper Mirnawan Nawawi, national goalkeeper coach M. Nadarajah, national goalkeeper S. Kumar and national coach Paul Revington **with aspiring goalkeepers** yesterday.