Near perfect first round

TOP GUNS: KLHC looking good to stretch their advantage at next stage

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Defending champions Kuala Lumpur Hockey Club (KLHC) were made to sweat before edging Sapura 3-2 in a Malaysia Hockey League Premier Division match at the Kuantan Stadium yesterday.

KLHC completed the first round with only one blemish, a 3-3 draw against Tenaga Nasional, and look good to break free in the second round starting on Friday.

KLHC coach K. Dharmaraj said it was an important win, as they will start the second round against Sapura again.

"We let in a goal and had to chase for the win which resulted in unnecessary pressure in the last 10 minutes. However, I am happy that we did not drop points in this match as we will be playing Sapura again on Friday in the second leg.

"It was an important win, as I did not want to give Sapura an edge going into Friday," said Dharmaraj.

KLHC were given a scare in the sixth minute when Azrul Hasbullah connected a reverse stick cross to hand Sapura the lead, but Pakistani import Muhammad Imran put them level off a 35th minute penalty corner.

And two quick goals — by Imran in the 48th minute and Chua Boon Huat in the 54th — gave KLHC some breathing space.

Sapura’s Khasif Ali converted a penalty corner in the 60th minute to reduce the margin but could not capitalise on two more penalty corners in the 64th and 65th minutes.

As for UniKL, they finally won their second match in mid-season when Noor Faeez Ibrahim scored in the 18th, 22nd and 67th minutes for his hat-trick. The Terengganu goal was scored by Jivan Mohan in the 40th minute.

"It was a fantastic performance and I am really proud of my players. They never gave our opponents much space, and we hope to build on this in the second round," said UniKL coach Arul Selvaraj.

Results — Premier Division: Sapura 2 KLHC 3, Terengganu 1 UniKL 3, Tenaga 5 Maybank 1.