KLHC thump hapless Terengganu to stay top

**BY S. RAMAGURU**

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Defending champions KL Hockey Club maintained their four-point lead in the Premier Division after beating Terengganu 4-1 at the National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The KLHC side are on course to retain their Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) title after securing 22 points with four more matches to go. Maybank are their nearest challengers with 18 points after eight matches played.

KLHC also remain the only unbeaten team in the Premier Division.

It was a stroll for the champions as they scored two goals in the first half for a buffer. Mohamed Syamin Yusof scored a field goal in the 24th minute and Chua Boon Huat added the second in the 32nd minute.

Akhtar Ali scored the third goal in the 41st minute followed by Kelvinder Singh five minutes later. Tengku Ahmad Tajuddin replied for Terengganu in the 59th minute.

Earlier, Pakistani forward Shakeel Abassi was the saviour for Maybank when he scored a field goal in the last minute to sink a gritty Nur Insafi 4-3.

The win gave the Tigers 18 points and took them three points ahead of third-placed Tenaga Nasional.

Maybank, who defeated Tenaga 4-3 on Saturday, held the lead thrice and each time poor defending gave way for Nur Insafi to equalise. Just as the match was about to end, Shakeel raced in to the D and slammed home a field goal, which ensured full points.

Maybank coach Wallace Tan said that having to play back-to-back matches took a toll on the players.

"But we are thankful that Shakeel managed to get the winner. It is always about staying ahead in the standings and the three-point gap with Tenaga is a welcome relief," said Wallace.

"We take one match at a time. As I have said many times, we need to convert the chances to win matches. It was tough but to be fair, Nur Insafi are an improved side. They just allowed one goal against Tenaga and today you could see they have the ability to play good hockey," he added.

Mohamed Waqas gave Maybank the lead in the 12th minute while Jiwa Mohan added a brace (42nd and 50th). For Nur Insafi, the opening two goals came from Ahmad Ridhwan (17th and 46th minutes) while Nur Hrsikesa scored the third (56th).

At the opposite pitch, Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UnikL) moved into fourth place when they defeated Sapura 2-1 for their third win in the league.

Mohamed Noor Faeez scored the opening goal in the 21st minute from a penalty corner while Mohamed Taufik Hamid added the second (58th).

Sapura managed to reduce the deficit in the 62nd minute off Faridzul Afiq but the goal failed to spur them on.