Tigers roar to second
Maybank whip Sapura in final league match

By S. RAMAGURU

KUALA LUMPUR: Maybank came good in their last match to finish runners-up in the Premier Division and earned a bye in the quarter-finals of the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL).

In a match they needed to collect full points, the Tigers defeated Sapura 4-2 at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil.

It was the Pakistani brigade that made the difference for the Tigers. Shakeel Abassi scored a brace while Mohamed Irfan and Mohamed Waqas contributed the other two goals. Sapura scored through Engku Abdul Malek and Mohamed Redza Maadun.

Maybank will now move straight into the semi-finals for the overall title along with champions Kuala Lumpur Hockey Club.

KLHC, who were crowned champions last weekend, received their league trophy yesterday and the RM70,000 prize money. The Tigers collected RM50,000 while third-placed Tenaga Nasional received RM40,000.

The other four finishers in the Premier Division will play in the two-leg quarter-finals, which will be held on Wednesday and Friday.

In the draw made after the last preliminary round match yesterday, Tenaga were placed in the bottom half with Maybank while Sapura were in the top half with KLHC.

In the quarter-finals, Tenaga will play Terengganu while Sapura will clash with Universiti Kuala Lumpur.

Coach Wallace Tan was glad to see Maybank secure a bye in the quarter-finals.

"It was a tough outing. I'm happy with the runners-up spot. That is long overdue.

"The last time we finished in the top two was in 1995. That is almost an 18-year wait.

"In 1999, we finished second but that was for the overall title.

"This is a breakthrough for us and we must look forward to the next round now," said Wallace.

In Division One, champions UiTM and TNB Thunderbolt were the teams given a bye in the quarter-finals.

In the last eight match-ups, Sunday 2030 are drawn to meet SSTMI while Uniten-KPT will meet MBI.
RESULTS AND STANDINGS

PREMIER DIVISION

MAYBANK 4  SAPURA 2
NUR INSAFI 2  UNIKL 4
TENAGA NASIONAL 4  TERENGGANU 3

P  W  D  L  F  A  Pts
KLHC 12  11  1  0  54  19  34
MAYBANK 12  7  1  4  40  35  22
TENAGA 12  6  3  3  37  27  21
SAPURA 12  4  2  6  29  31  14
TERENGGANU 12  4  1  7  30  37  13
UNIKL 12  4  1  7  20  32  13
NUR INSAFI 12  1  1  10  19  49  4

THE KNOCKOUT DRAW
(All matches at National Hockey Stadium, Bukit Jalil)

PREMIER DIVISION
QUARTER-FINALS
(1st leg - Wednesday, 2nd leg - Friday)
Match 1: SAPURA vs UNIKL
Match 2: TENAGA NASIONAL vs TERENGGANU

SEMI-FINALS
(1st leg - May 10, 2nd leg May 12)
KLHC vs Winners Match 1
MAYBANK vs Winners Match 2
FINAL: MAY 19

DIVISION ONE
QUARTER-FINALS
(1st leg - Wednesday, 2nd leg - Friday)
Match 1: SUNDAY 2030 vs SSTMI
Match 2: UNITEN-KPT vs MBI

SEMI-FINALS
(1st leg - May 10, 2nd leg May 12)
UITM vs Winners Match 1
TNB THUNDERBOLT vs Winners Match 2
FINALS: MAY 19