A tough act to follow

Joel out to emulate father and grandpa’s feat

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: Joel Samuel van Huizen (pic) comes from a proud family of hockey legends and the 20-year-old Sapura player is eager to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather.

The good news is that Project 2013 squad coach K. Dharmaraj has been impressed with his performance in the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL).

And Joel is set to be called up to join the Project’s training squad when the MHL ends on May 19. The squad are preparing for the Junior World Cup in Chandigarh, India, from Dec 5-16.

Joel’s grandfather, Lawrence van Huizen, is a former national player and also coached the national women’s hockey team.

Lawrence was also the assistant coach to the late Ho Koh Chai with the national men’s team for the 1975 World Cup here. Malaysia finished a creditable fourth in the tournament.

The 81-year-old Lawrence, who featured in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, has also contributed a lot towards developing hockey in Seremban by conducting free coaching for two schools – the St Paul Institution and Convent Secondary.

Joel’s father, Stephen, is also ex-international and former national men’s coach, who guided Malaysia to their first-ever silver medal in the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games.

Stephen also played for Malaysia in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

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“I was in the Project training squad in 2010 and went on a playing tour to India and Europe. But I’ve never represented Malaysia at the junior or senior level yet.

“I want to be the third generation player from my family to feature in the Olympics.”

Joel’s team, Sapura finished fourth in the Premier Division and will feature in the first leg of the quarter-finals against sixth-placed Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil today.

The return leg will be on Friday.

Joel, who can play either in midfield or forward, expects a strong challenge from the varsity team.

“We played them twice in the league ... we won one (3-1) and lost the other (2-1). The pressure will be on us, as former champions, to get the better of UniKL in the quarter-finals,” said Joel.

“I do feel the pressure because it’s not going to be easy to match their achievements.

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TODAY
*All matches at the National Hockey Stadium, Bukit Jalil*
FIRST Leg
PREMIER DIVISION (PITCH II)
SAPURA vs UNIKL - 6pm
TENAGA NASIONAL vs TERENGGANU - 8pm
DIVISION ONE (PITCH I)
SUNDAY 2030 vs SSTMI - 6pm
UNITEN-KPT vs MBI - 8pm

FRIDAY
SECOND Leg (PITCH I)
PREMIER DIVISION
TERENGGANU vs TENAGA NASIONAL - 6pm
UNIKL vs SAPURA - 8pm
DIVISION ONE (PITCH II)
MBI vs UNITEN-KPT - 6pm
SSTMI vs SUNDAY 2030 - 8pm