



Headline	KL ready to rule Under-16 roost again, says coach Embaraj		
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KL ready to rule Under-16 roost again, says coach Embaraj

BY ASHREENA PILLAI

PETALING JAYA: Defending champions KL will be out to stamp their dominance in the MHC-Milo-NSC Under-16 hockey championships once again, this time under new coach K. Embaraj when the tournament kicks off at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil today.

Embaraj, who previously coached the Malaysian Hockey League (MHL) side UniKL, will be looking to lend his expertise to the five-time champions who open their campaign against Perlis in an early match today.

Highly-tipped to lift the title again, KL are pooled in Group A alongside Terengganu, Negri Sembilan, Perak, Selangor and Sabah.

"We're the defending champions,

so there is pressure to win. KL have been champions for many years now, so of course we want to keep the streak going," said Embaraj.

"We're in a very interesting group. Terengganu have quite a strong side. Perak (in Group B) are also good. But we will not underestimate any of our opponents. We will take each match one at a time and our goal is to approach each game with the same mindset, to play our best, enjoy our hockey and win our games.

"I've inherited a good team. Most of the boys play in the junior league and also for the sports school, so they know how to play (good) hockey. We've just been working on sharpening key aspects of our

play, working on our offence and defence and hopefully we can stick to the plan and play a solid game against Perlis."

In other Group A matches, Terengganu will take on Sabah while Negri Sembilan squares off against Selangor. In Group B, last year's runners-up Malacca will take on Perak while Penang face Pahang and Johor play Kelantan.

Meanwhile in the girls' competition, Group A will see Kedah take on Perak while eight-placed finishers Pahang take on Negri. In Group B, last year's losing semi-finalists Penang will take on Kelantan while KL will face Terengganu.

Fixtures

BOYS

Group A: KL vs Perlis; Terengganu vs Sabah, Negri Sembilan vs Selangor.

Group B: Penang vs Pahang; Malacca vs Perak; Johor vs Kelantan.

GIRLS

Group A: Kedah vs Perak; Pahang vs Negri Sembilan.

Group B: Penang vs Kelantan; KL vs Terengganu.