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Hockey: Tenaga champs whip UniKL to ignite title hopes

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former champions Tenaga Nasional secured their first win in the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) when they beat Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) 4-2 at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil. In another match, double champions KL Hockey Club regained top spot in the standings after defeating overnight leaders Maybank 4-3. It was the Tigers first defeat. KLHC started the scoring through Mohamed Razie Rahim in the seventh minute while Pakistani import Akhtar Ali scored in the eighth and 44th minutes. The other goal-getter was Umar Bhutta (41st minute). The Tigers managed to score in the 34th minute through Mohamed Syafiq Zain and then in the second half through Dick Chenny Walli and Mohamed Irfan in the 59th and 66th minutes respectively. In the earlier match, after two draws in the opening weekend, yesterdays win was a welcome relief for Tenaga who aimed to put their title ambitions back on track. The match proved to be a scrappy affair but Tenaga were in control for much of the match and could have won with a higher scoreline. Still their coach Nor Azlan Bakar was happy that they had finally won their first match and hoped that would revive their spirits for the Sapura match today. It was not that good a match as we need to just collect three points. That was the crucial thing today. I am glad that the players stuck to their game plan and managed to score when the chances were there. I am disappointed with some of the misses but we have to learn from it, he said. And we cannot afford to let up when we play Sapura. We have to make sure of a second win. I am sure the players will rise to the occasion, said Nor Azlan, who is chief coach of the team for the first time. After a slow start, Tenaga got their first goal in the 18th minute through a field goal scored by Mohamed Firhan Azhari. And two minutes later, skipper Mohamed Amin Rahim put them ahead with the second goal through their first penalty corner of the match. The score remained at 2-0 at half time. Two minutes into the second half, Tenaga went further ahead with Faizal Saari scoring with a drag flick from another penalty corner. Then in the 57th minute, youngster Mohamed Sharil Saabah added the fourth goal with a field attempt. UniKL managed to score two consolation goals in the 61st and 70th minutes through Mohamed Noor Faez Ibrahim off two penalty corners. Up north at the USM Hockey Stadium in Penang, newcomers Terengganu also won their first match 5-1 against Nur Insafi. The win gave the east coast side four points and out them in fourth place in the standings.