

## Local stars ready to seize the stage without foreigners

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PETALING JAYA: It's a chance for the local stars to shine in the absence of foreign players in the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) as attention zooms in on the Charity Shield match between Tenaga Nasional and Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) today.



**Lethal up front:**  
Tengku Ahmad  
Tajuddin is expected to  
deliver the goals for  
UniKL.

The league, long delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic, finally got under way yesterday under strict precautionary measures with eight participating teams battling it out in a bio-secure sports bubble.

Foreigners have dominated the league in recent years but the teams are not able to rely on their services this time.

South Korea's Jang Jong-hyun, playing for Terengganu, was the top scorer for the 2020 season with 23 goals in 17 matches.

Which local player will hog the limelight this year?

UniKL head coach Megat Azrafiq Termizi said they would again be chasing another historic year following their massive achievement in 2020 of winning the treble – the Charity Shield, league title and TNB Cup.

“Right now, we have an injury-free squad and all the players are healthy. We are ready for our first match tomorrow (today),” said Megat.

“We do not have foreign imports this time but that does not mean we are weaker.

“We have experienced and quality players to match Tenaga.

“The team who make the least mistakes and take their chances well will win,” he said, adding that they have also prepared for the possibility of the match extending to a penalty shootout.

UniKL are expected to rely on the services of national players Razie Rahim (defender), Marhan Jalil (midfield) and Tengku Ahmad Tajuddin (forward) to deliver the results. Tenaga, who have always relied on local players, feel they have a shot at all three titles. “We have always been playing without import players, so that will not be much of a ‘shock’ for us this season,” said coach and former national defender Nor Azlan Bakar. “The other teams have relied on foreign players and will find the situation a little different. “This is the best season for Tenaga to aim for a clean sweep of the three titles.”