

HOPES REST ON TENGKU

UniKL banking on veteran national player to defend MHL treble

New Straits Times · 8 Jan 2021 · JUGJET SINGH jugjet@nst.com.my

IF Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) successfully defend their Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) treble this season, Tengku Ahmad Tajuddin Tengku Abdul Jalil will surely be the man behind it.

With no foreign players to bank on, UniKL and the other seven teams cannot afford a hiccup in the one-round competition, which starts on Jan 14.

UniKL will open their campaign in the Charity Shield against Tenaga Nasional. The university side are also the defending league and TNB Cup champions.

“We will depend on our youth players this season as we could not hire imports due to the Covid19 pandemic.

“I want to see the juniors move the team in the direction it needs to ensure success.

“We still have the time to play some friendly matches to foster a better understanding ahead of the Charity Shield,” said the 35-year-old Tengku.

It is not too much to say that he is one of the best comeback stories in Malaysian sports.

Tengku, a seasoned national player, made a super return just days after sustaining a fractured jaw last season, although he was told to rest, by leading his side to victories.

He played the remaining matches last year with a headgear designed for rugby players.

Among the newcomers are goalkeeper Shafie Sahrom, midfielder Pavandip Singh and forward Nur Rahul Hrisikesa.

Tengku also stressed that there would be no competitive imbalance in the league as all teams would not have foreign players.

“There are no small teams in the league. I have great respect for our opponents.

“For UniKL, it is going to be another great opportunity for us to show what we can do.

“We have to win all our matches to stay on top,” he added.

The other teams fighting for honours are Terengganu Hockey Team, Maybank, TNB Thunderbolts, NurInsafi, UiTM HA and Sabah.