

99 Speedmart's generous RM1.2m boost for Junior World Cup

By Jugjet SinghBernama - September 22, 2023 @ 6:56pm



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BUKIT JALIL: The Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHC) received an unexpected RM1.2 million windfall for the Kuala Lumpur Junior World Cup (JWC) when 99 Speedmart came knocking on their door.

The JWC is scheduled from Dec 5-16 at the National Hockey Stadium, and MHC has set a semi-final target for coach Amin Rahim and his team.

"We were pleasantly surprised by the RM1.2 million sponsorship from 99 Speedmart, as we had not approached them. They approached us, and this funding will not only help MHC cover the costs of hosting the JWC but also support some of the women's team expenses at the Hangzhou Asian Games," said MHC president Datuk Seri Subahan Kamal here on Friday.

While the men's team is fully sponsored, the women's hockey team are participating in the Asian Games under category B, meaning they have to cover their own expenses.

Subahan stated that MHC will decide in the next week or two whether to sell tickets for matches, which will be held exclusively at Pitch I of the National Hockey Stadium.

"We are still working on ticketing details and are considering the pricing carefully. Setting the price too low will not benefit anyone, while making it too pricey may discourage fans from attending, especially families. Additionally, we will have several hockey-related activities in Putrajaya, where all the teams will stay," said Subahan.

Coach Amin noted that his players have significantly improved physically and sharper in their penalty corner conversions after returning from the European Tour.

"Although the scores from our European Tour may not seem encouraging, our team improved after every match.

"After returning to Malaysia, we focused on enhancing their fitness, which has also improved.

"We also had Australian penalty corner specialist Christopher Ciriello recently to fine-tune our players' execution, and I observed improvements in that area as well," said Amin.

During the recent Tour, the national juniors lost 8-2 to Germany, 1-0 and 2-1 to France. They edged England 3-2 in their first friendly but lost 3-1 in the second.

In the JWC, Malaysia are in Group A with defending champions Argentina, Australia, and Chile.