

Headline **Shafina goes on a goal spree**
 Date **22. May 2008** Language **ENGLISH**
 Media Title **The Star** Page No **M26,27**
 Section **Metro** Article Size **873** cm2
 Circulation **293375** Frequency **Daily**
 Readership **1026812** Color **Full Color**



We are the champs: The UPM women's futsal side celebrating their victory.

Shafina goes on a goal spree

UPM futsal striker helps team emerge champions

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Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) 2-1. They were rewarded with two goals through Shafina and Wan Rezawana Wan Daud in the first half of 15-minute play.

HOTSHOT striker Shafina Bazilah Shamsul was in top form to assist Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) to emerge as champions in the opening leg of the Malaysian Universities Sports Council (MASUM) Games women's futsal competition at Universiti Malaya (UM) on Saturday.

At the end of the match, UPM coach Norhafiszah Baba opted to substitute two key players - Nor Saliza A. Soobni and Shafina.

The 23-year-old undergraduate in communication studies netted 12 goals at the five-day tournament.

"We wanted to give both of them a breather because they played a very important role to control the pace in the match. In fact, Saliza was not at her best. She was carrying an injury and could not strike the ball hard," Norhafiszah said.

She gave credit to her teammates for their exceptional support and assistance on the court to allow her to make the opportunities count.

And UTM took opportunity of the change and replied in the closing stage with Izwyn Zulkapri slotting their consolation goal.

"We formed the team last year and we only took part in one competition prior to this. We played well here because we executed the set pieces and shooting drills that we practised in training," she added.

In their preliminary matches, UPM topped the group with two convincing wins over UM and Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK).

They thumped both sides with an identical 9-0 score to advance to the knockout stage.

In the final, UPM beat Universiti

"It was a good match against



Chase is on: UPM captain Rose Poyang Jok (right) tussling for possession of the ball against Izwyn (in blue) from UTM.

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Top form: Shafina of UPM netted 12 goals over five matches.

UM because I chalked up five goals in the opening match," said Shafina, who was a former national volleyball player.

En route to the final, UPM defeated Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) 4-0 in the quarter-finals and edged Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) 3-1 in the semi-finals.

In addition, UPM goalkeeper Siti Zubaidah Che Hat also gave a respectable display standing in between the posts and conceded only two goals in five matches.

Meanwhile, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) forced the match down to the wire against UiTM in the third-fourth playoff.

Following a goalless draw in regulatory time, UiTM took the third spot with the solitary goal from Nazrah Alwi in the first half of five-minute extra time.

The inaugural women's futsal introduced at the MASUM Games drew a good turnout with 15 teams in the fray.

Only Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) pulled out of the tournament.

Meanwhile, athletes from the

»We played well here because we executed the set pieces and shooting drills that we practised in training«

SHAFINA BAZILAH SHAMSUL

public universities nationwide also competed in nine other sports - women's hockey, softball, handball, lawn bowl, silat, rowing, cricket, kayaking and bowling for the season's first MASUM Games.

The second and final MASUM Games is scheduled at Universiti Malaysia Sabah from May 21 to 28.



In control: Wan Rezawan (in red) of UPM shutting down a move from UTM (in blue) while UPM goalkeeper Siti Zubaidah (in yellow) looks on.