

SPORT

RUGBY

Angels in trouble for tour

PENALTY: MRU come down hard on team for unsanctioned trip

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TREADING carefully since being penalised by World Rugby (WR) for the Crescent Cup fracas, the Malaysian Rugby Union (MRU) have provisionally suspended Serdang Angels for competing abroad without sanctioning from the national body.

MRU general manager Mazuri Sallehudin said the union viewed the offence seriously as the Universiti Putra Malaysia team had breached WR regulations 16.2.2 and 16.2.3 by playing in Thailand earlier this month without permission.

“We had only found out about it when someone posted it on our (Facebook) page.

“What we have been told is that it was some kind of tour,” said Mazuri.

“We are disappointed that they did not inform us beforehand as we had checked with the Thai Rugby Union and their teams had informed them.

“This is not the first time Angels have done this (compete abroad without sanction). We issued them with a show cause letter on Feb 10 and they have until Feb 24 to reply.

“Once we receive the reply, the council will decide (on the possible action) but until then they are suspended from all competitions.

“This is serious as far as we are concerned because it is the union that will have to answer if there are any incidents abroad, especially as the Angels squad is largely made up of national players.

“MRU are under observation by WR and we do not want to get into trouble.”

Angels have yet to play a game in the ongoing Super League.

Defending champions Keris Conlay were given a 28-0 walkover for their match against Angels which had been scheduled for Saturday.

WR had last month handed MRU a £5,000 (RM30,000) fine which is to be paid within six months as well as a suspended fine of £20,000 over

four years for fielding an ineligible player during the Crescent Cup last year.

They were also slapped with a suspended fine of £7,500 over three years for the fight which broke out between Malaysian and Algerian players during the final.

MRU will have to pay the suspended fines if any more incidents happen within the three and four year timeframe.

Meanwhile, MRU have identified 12 players who were absent from the national 15s squad's friendly against expatriate club Kuala Lumpur Tigers last week without informing the team management prior to the game.

They have also been issued show cause letters and face possible suspension.