HOCKEY

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Malaysia top group to make round robin stage with perfect record

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MALAYSIA toyed with Oman but still won 7-1 yesterday to complete their Group B campaign in the Asia Cup with maximum points in Dhaka.

It was Malaysia’s 13th straight victory over Oman, and the final score yesterday was an improvement to the 6-1 win in the World League Round Two competition in March.

Malaysia topped Group B with nine points and will now challenge for the title in the round robin stage.

“We played to avoid injuries and also to test options in midfield in the absence of Fitri Shaari,” said national coach Stephen Van Huizen.

Fitri is currently in Kuala Lumpur to attend to his son, who is ill.

In Fitri’s shoes, Van Huizen tested his son, Joel, for several periods in the match.

“We are going to miss Fitri in midfield. I tried out several players in Fitri’s position and Joel was one of them,” he said.

Captain Shukri Muballih, who is injured, only played two minutes towards the end of the match.

“Shukri is carrying an ankle injury which he picked up before the tournament.”

“A successful penalty corner attempt here and I’m glad though the ball was not stopped by goalkeeper cool Jazlan,” said Najmi.

“Jazlan was trusted with variations in defence and he did well,” said Najmi.

“Although, I have been with the team for two years, I am still learning the ropes. If given a chance in the round robin stage, I will not waste it.”

Najmi also tested several variations in defence and he did well.

“All though the stopper bungled and the ball bounced away from Najmi, the 22-year-old kept his composure and slammed in a reverse stick which almost packed the board.

It was the seventh goal in Malaysia’s 7-1 win.

“Yes, it was my first penalty corner attempt here and I’m glad that I managed to score even though the ball was not stopped well,” said Najmi.

“I knew I had to make it count to gain the team’s trust. And if given a chance in the round robin stage, I will not waste it.”

Najmi also tested several variations in defence and he did well.

“Although, I have been with the team for two years, I am still learning the ropes. If given more time and chances to take penalty corners, I believe I can do better,” said Najmi.

Najmi is the third player to convert a penalty corner for Malaysia after Faizal Shaari and Shahril Saabah in Dhaka.

“Jazlan is the third player to convert a penalty corner for Malaysia after Faizal Shaari and Shahril Saabah in Dhaka. Malaysia’s No 1 flicker Ruzai Ramli, however, has yet to score. JUGJET SINGH

Cool Jazlan scores from his first penalty corner

NAJMI Jazlan was trusted with only one penalty corner in three matches and he made the most of it by scoring a lovely goal against Oman in an Asia Cup Group B match in Dhaka, Bangladesh yesterday.

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