



Faizal Saari (right) celebrates after scoring Malaysia's first goal against Poland in an Azlan Shah Cup match in Ipoh yesterday. PIC BY EFFENDY RASHID

Saari brothers shine against Poland

A BROTHERLY act helped subdue a fighting Poland as Malaysia went ahead to win 5-1 in their opening Azlan Shah Cup match in Ipoh yesterday.

Poland, who arrived a day before the tournament, defended stoutly for 15 minutes before Malaysia found their form in the second quarter.

Faizal Saari scored off Malaysia's first penalty corner in the 20th minute while brother Fitri nailed a field goal in the 28th minute.

It was Faizal again in the 30th minute to make it 3-0 before Poland scored off a penalty cor-

ner attempt five seconds from half-time.

After the breather, Ashran Hamsani got the fourth in the 36th minute, and Faizal scored his well-deserved hat-trick nine minutes later.

The win is a boost for today's tough encounter against Asian Games champions Japan.

"It is a good start to the tournament. I must thank Dutch penalty corner specialist Taeke Taekema for the training sessions in Kuantan," said Faizal yesterday.

"Everything went well, and this is what we are looking for in this team."

National coach Roelant Oltmans said: "The team were well organised for this match. However, we need to regroup and focus on Japan who even though they lost today showed they were defensively strong."

Poland coach Karol Sniezek praised his players for their brave performance.

"We could not match Malaysia. We are not at our best level as we only came here as a last minute replacement (for South Africa).

"This is not our best squad. Five regulars could not make the trip due to other commitments," said Sniezek.