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Don't rely on penalty corners alone, warns Sasydharans

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THE hard work on improving penalty corner execution is paying dividends quite handsomely but Malacca City Council are aware that they can't go on living on just penalty corner set-pieces.

Statistics reveal that more than 50 per cent of their goals this season have come from penalty corners and although they are sitting comfortably at the top of the table, coach V. Sasydharan reckons that his forwards need to polish their sharpness in front of the goal.

Yesterday, the Malacca outfit maintained their fine run of form with a 2-1 victory over visitors Ipoh CC at the Melaka Hockey Stadium. The winning goal came off a another penalty corner in the 70th minute.

"This team (Ipoh CC) gave us a run for our money and we knew it was never going to be easy against them. They were never going to give in without a fight. We were lucky to dig into our expertise in penalty corners in the dying seconds," said Sasydharan with a snigger.

"However, we need to be more efficient with our finishing in open play. We just can't rely on our set pieces from penalty corners. We are starting to get too dependent on penalty corners. The forwards are doing well in creating infringements in the D to win penalty corners but they need to score goals too to give us more options."

Despite leading the pack and gaining their fifth win of the season, Sasydharan said they are not assured of winning the title just yet which comes with a promotion to the Premier League. He said with teams not having a consistent amount of games, period, it is difficult to say who's who in the league.

Malacca CC have three games more than Bukit Jalil Sports School, Bandar Penawar Sports School and UiTM.

"While most teams have been playing quite consistently, the two sports schools haven't had the chance of playing much. This was due to the MSSM meet where they were forced to release their players to their respective states. We even sought MHF's permission to postpone our match against UiTM next week, because four of our players will be involved in the MSSM tournament beginning on Tuesday.

"When they are back with the team, we will continue with our quest for the title. At the moment the race is still open. We cannot evaluate the strength of any of the top teams yet. The sports

schools have only played a couple of matches so far. So, it is difficult to judge them or compare them with the other teams. Other than the sports schools, ATM, Air Force and Dolphins still have a fair shot.”

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