KUALA LUMPUR: Home ground advantage failed to help Royal Selangor Club (RSC) overcome Tunku Mahkota Ismail Sports School (TMISS) in the National Inter-Club Championship (NICC) at the RSC Sports Annexe recently.

The final saw the home side, who had earlier beaten the Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Lions in the semi-finals, start the match brightly, and took an early lead through a try from flyhalf Theo Davios in the 23rd minute.

Their lead, however, did not last long as TMISS, gradually began to find their rhythm. And their increased pressure on RSC paid off when they were awarded a penalty try in the 35th minute.

Mohd Saizul Hafiz Md Noor made no mistake, and his team, who had beaten RMAF Blackhawks in the semi-finals, took a 7-5 lead.

Mohd Saizul was again in the thick of action as he scored his team’s first try from open play in the 37th minute which he then converted to give his side a 14-5 lead going into the break.

RSC came out firing in the second half and were awarded a penalty in the 53rd minute which Davios converted. They were, however, soon left on the back foot when Hannaf Zaki was given his marching orders in the 61st minute for a dangerous tackle.

TMISS did not take long to capitalise through winger Ameer Nasrun who scored a brace of tries in the 67th and 73th minute to give his side a healthy lead going into the closing stages of the match.

RSC managed a reply through Sebastian Barros in the 78th minute. However, it was not enough to save the match as TMISS emerged 24-15 winners.

"We had come here expecting a win. We managed to do it but it was much harder than expected," said Wan Ibrahim, who is also the headmaster of TMISS.

"Our plan was to attack from the start and not give them a chance to put us under pressure but we could not do it as they held most of the possession early in the game.

"The second-half saw us control the match as they had tired out and it was easier for us from then on.

"I am very happy with my boys’ performance as they had shown they are not overawed, playing against bigger foreign players and stuck to our game plan."

TMISS and RSC are now competing in the ongoing Malaysian Rugby Union Super League as the top-four finishers in the second-tier NICC competition earn qualification to the event. By Fadhli Ishak