Changing of the guard

Fresh start for FA of Penang with new lineup

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The Penang football fraternity finally woke up from slumber and, in unprecedented fashion, incumbents holding key positions in the FA of Penang (FAP) were all floored from grace.

That was the scenario when the FAP held its annual general meeting on Saturday with affiliates displaying their dissatisfaction at the state of affairs Penang football has slipped into.

Penang football — which used to rub shoulders with the top brass in the Malaysian Super League challenge — has now fallen to a third tier state of affairs.

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But with Zahrain already voted out of office, Raja Munir saw it fit to withdraw from the contest.

The battle for the two vice-presidents’ seats was made into a four-way battle following company board member Tajuddin Zachariah’s decision to pull out of the race at the eleventh hour.

The fight saw incumbent Datuk Abdul Shukor Saileh being de-throned.

The former national midfield maestro managed to garner 19 votes and it was not enough to beat the 21 votes won by Universiti Sains Malaysia principal assistant registrar Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Shariff and the 20 votes for retired contractor Amer Yusoff Mohd Hassan.

The duo, both of whom were just Independent delegates at the last AGM, were confirmed as new vice-presidents, also beating former FAP treasurer, businessman Teoh Soo Beng who got 14 votes.

The decision of Mohd Azizuddin, the team manager of Premier League team USM FC, and Amer Yusoff to battle for the vice-presidency triggered a 10-way fight for the six independent delegates seats available.

Interestingly, only three candidates from the previous committee — L. Kartherisan (32 votes), Goh Choon Keong (22) and Amir Hazril Ahmad (21) — retained their seats, with Saad Hassan (24), Kamal Kalid (22) and Zainol Abidin Ahmad (18) emerging as the new faces.

An excited Mohd Foaz, though delighted to have been made a new leader in Penang football, was quick to stress that it was not time to be celebrating just yet.

“We may have been excited about being successful in our bid. But having been handed such a strong mandate by our affiliates, the time has come for all the elected to embark on a mission to restore Penang’s football pride,” said Mohd Foaz.

“We hope Penang will get back to realistic for us to target 2014 as the season to get Penang back to the Premier League challenge.”

However, despite being challenged by a relatively unknown Mohd Foaz Hamid of Bella Asas Bersatu, the president of a Division Two club from Tanjung Tokong, Zahrain failed to muster the much needed votes.

Instead, the FAP affiliates opted for a dramatic change with the hope of restoring Penang’s badly damaged pride.

Mohd Foaz, an independent construction consultant, sent Zahrain reeling by five clear votes, posting 21 of the 37 votes at stake, compared to the incumbent’s 16 votes.

Even the battle for the number two spot proved to be equally interesting with the incumbent, MyEG Services Bhd executive director Datuk Raja Munir Shah Raja Mustapha, deciding to throw in the towel after his challenge against a new face in Alliance University College of Medical Sciences (AUCMS) president Datuk Dr Zainuddin Mohd Wazir ended in an 18-18 deadlock.

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“We hope Penang will get back to the Premier League already ongoing, it will be realistic for us to target 2014 as the season to get Penang back to the Premier League challenge.”

“We hope Penang will get back to the country’s number one League challenge in the Super League two years later.

“For this to happen, there must be a concerted effort from all and I urge all elected, whether or not they are from the previous committee, to work closely together as a family.”
Winning feeling: Newly elected FAP president Mohd Foaz (wearing scarf) celebrating with committee members after the election held at Naza Hotel.