UiTM’s march losing steam

**FATIGUE:** Their battle on two fronts taking its toll on the team

**AJITPAL SINGH**

KUALA LUMPUR
ajitpalsingh@nst.com.my

UNIVERSITI Teknologi Mara (UiTM FC) is finding it tough to sustain the pace in two different leagues.

UiTM not only play in the FAM League but also in the Inter-University competition and coach Azman Eusoff admitted that his players are beginning to feel tired.

The university side started well in the FAM League but their form has shown signs of fatigue and they have dropped points in their last two matches.

UiTM suffered their first defeat of the season, losing 1-0 to Shahzan Muda on April 8 before they were held 0-0 by Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP FC) last weekend in Shah Alam.

“We are actually not doing too badly in the league. We started well but my players are showing signs of fatigue. It is not easy for them as they also have to concentrate on their studies. I cannot push them so much,” said Azman, a former assistant coach of the National Under-21 team.

“The management wants us to do well in both competitions and so far things are looking good in the Inter-University league, where we are leading the standings.

“I believe we will be in better condition once the Inter-University league ends in the second week of June.”

Azman has a small squad of 25 players and all of them are playing in both leagues but presently only 22 of them are fit as captain Azman Shahir Ismail (defender), Muhd Razreen Mohd Jesni (striker) and Norhadi Ubaidillah (goalkeeper) are injured.

“I have been taking a careful approach to motivate them and all of them have been receptive. I talk to them regularly to make sure their focus is on their football,” said Azman.

UiTM had an excellent match against PBAPP last weekend but were let down by poor finishing. PBAPP goalkeeper Megat Amir Faizal was also a huge stumbling block for the homesters.

In the second half, Azman replaced midfielder Khairul Naif Mahyuddin with striker Muhd Nursalam Zainal Abidin and the move helped UiTM to add pace in their game.

Muhd Nursalam had the goalmouth at his mercy after evading challengers from two PBAPP defenders but his grounder was saved by keeper Megat Amir.

UiTM play favourites Public Service Commission (KL SPA) on Sunday and Azman said his team must beat them to remain league contenders.

“SPA are the best team in the league and we will need to be at our best for a favourable result. We are not at our condition but hopefully things would get better on Sunday,” Azman added.

SPA’s untainted record of five straight wins ended last weekend when they were held 0-0 by Land Forces in Kuala Lumpur.

They, however, still lead the standings with 16 points, four more than second-placed Shahzan Muda.

Malacca, meanwhile, recorded their second straight win of the season by overcoming Melodi Jaya FC 2-0 at the Kulai Mini Stadium.