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## Penang assert claim for promotion

**PENANG** ended the first round of the Premier League firmly in the mix for promotion after laying down yet another marker by beating Johor 4-1 at the City Stadium on Friday.

Despite goalkeeper G. Jeevananthan dropping another clanger, Penang rallied to score three times in the second half with striker Titi Buengo helping himself to two goals to stay level on points with leaders Police.

Though Police can extend their lead to three points when they play their game in hand against Universiti Teknologi Mara tomorrow, Penang must surely be considered as serious contenders for the title as well.

Coach K. Devan was pleased with how his team recovered from the disappointment of a 0-0 draw with lowly Public Service Commission on Monday with the rout of Johor.

"I am happy with the performance but more importantly is we got the three points," said Devan after the game as Penang extended their unbeaten run to nine matches with their biggest win of the season.

"It's the first time we have won by such a big score and I am glad that we not only scored many goals but also collected the points and the overall performance was good."

However, Devan would not have been pleased with Jeevananthan, who not for the first time this season, committed an error bordering on the comical.

Jeevananthan dropped a harmless cross by Azniee Taib into the path of Shahril Ishak, who had the easiest tap-in ever to equalise on the stroke of half-time.

The error recalled Jeevananthan's atrocious display in a 5-1 hammering by Police on Jan 27 in Penang's only league defeat so far.

Luckily for Penang, the mistake did not prove costly as Lee Gil-hoon and Shazuan Ashraf Matthews added to Buengo's brace for the emphatic win.

"We did not play well," said Johor coach Rajko Magic whose side are 11 points behind the top two in seventh.

"Our problem was we could not stop their number 24 (Buengo). He was too strong for our defence line, he scored two times and had one assist."

● **D. SAARVINDRAN** scored his third goal in the Queensland National Premier League as YOUNG Tigers A claimed their second win in four matches by beating Olympic Queensland 2-1 at Goodwin Park yesterday.

Nazirul Naim Che Hashim added to Saarvindran's 18th-minute opener with the second goal in first-half stoppage time, after Daniel Byrne had equalised a few minutes earlier.

Olympic ended the game with 10 men after Matt Mundy was red carded in the 56th minute.

"A second in four matches. Congratulations to the officials and players but the consistency must continue," tweeted national youth coach Ong Kim Swee, who is back in Malaysia to monitor the local league as part of his duties as national caretaker coach. **By Devinder Singh**