

Headline	Sabah beaten 3-1		
MediaTitle	Borneo Post (KK)		
Date	15 Apr 2014	Color	Full Color
Section	Sport	Circulation	88,150
Page No	20	Readership	166,173
Language	English	ArticleSize	537 cm ²
Journalist	Lester J. Bingkasan	AdValue	RM 6,184
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 18,552



Sabah beaten 3-1

By Lester J. Bingkasan

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah threw away a one goal lead to lose 3-1 to Penang at the Likas Stadium here last night.

Brazilian import Andre Reinaldo Esposito's superb free kick had given Sabah a first half lead but Penang came back strongly to turn the tables on their hosts.

The inability of the home side to defend from dead ball situations were fully exposed by Penang, who scored via Muhd Zamri Chin, Buengo Andre Titi and Lee Gil Hoon.

The defeat left Sabah still searching for a first win in the second round of the Premier League, having lost to another Penang side PBAPP FC 1-0 recently.

In fact, it was a game of two halves for the state senior side where they were impressive in a commanding opening half.

New foreign signing Jerome Suku Doe wasted a glorious chance in the sixth minute when he shot well wide of the post with the goal at his mercy after Maxius initial shot was blocked by goalkeeper G. Jeevananthan.

Doe then shot over the bar shortly after being put clean through on goal.

Sabah continued to dominate their highly ranked opponents and got their reward on 37 minutes.

Andre curled a breathtaking shot from 25 metres that former Sabah goalie Jeevananthan failed to keep out at full stretch.

Penang's burly striker Titi then beat the off side trap but shot wide on 43 minutes.

Sabah re-emerged for the second half with much purpose and it was proven with back-to-back dangerous attempts on goal.

Team captain Rosdin Wasli headed against the bar in the 50th minute while Andre flashed a half volley wide just a minute later.

From then on, however, Sabah seemed to be a fading side while Penang stepped up the gear to penetrate the home defence.

In the 52nd minute, Zamri sneaked among the Sabah defenders to head home from a corner kick for the equaliser.

It proved to be the turning point for Penang who doubled their tally through Titi in the 65th minute.

The lanky striker got the slightest of touch with his head to divert a free kick into the bottom corner of the net, beating Irwan Jamil in Sabah goal.

Penang's Korean import Gil Hoo then made sure the points were safe when he again capitalised on Sabah's poor organisation in defending a free kick to glance a header past a static Irwan.

The defeat was Sabah's fifth of the season, in which they registered four wins and four draws for 16 points to remain in mid-table of the 12-team league.

PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS

KUALA LUMPUR: Results of the Premier League matches played at various venues yesterday:

PBAPP FC 1 Felda United FC 2

Police 1 Johor Darul Ta'zim II 0

UITM FC 2 SPA Putrajaya FC 1

Perlis 1 Kedah 6

DRB Hicom FC 1 N.Sembilan 3

Sabah 1 Penang 3

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GOAL IN SIGHT ... Sabah midfielder Andre Reinaldo Esposito (right) tries to add to his first half goal against Penang in the Premier League clash at the Likas Stadium last night.



LIVELY PRESENCE ... Sabah new foreign signing Jerome Suku Doe (left) proves to be a real nuisance for Penang defence with his athleticism and work rate up front. - Photo by Aniq Azraei.