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HOCKEY

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By Aftar Singh



Sharing the spoils: PKS Uniten-KPT's Ellya Syahirah Ellias (centre) celebrating her goal against Blue Warriors during their National Women's League match yesterday. — M. AZHAR ARIF / The Star

KUALA LUMPUR: Siti Zulaikha Husain scored in the dying minutes to help Blue Warriors snatch a 1-1 draw in the top-of-the-table clash against PKS Universiti Tenaga Nasional (Uniten)-KPT in the National Women's League.



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With the draw, Uniten and Blue Warriors are tied with 23 points from nine matches. But Uniten top the standings with a better goal difference.

Both teams will meet again in the second round match tomorrow at the Tun Razak Hockey in Jalan Duta.

The university team started well by taking the lead in the 15th minute at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil yesterday.

Ella Syahirah Ellia's shot from the top of the semi-circle sailed past national goalkeeper Farah Ayuni Yahya.

Uniten kept up the pressure and created many chances but they failed to increase the lead.

Blue Warriors, powered by three former India national players – Ritu Rani, Reena Ritu and Narinder Kaur – started to play well in the last two quarters.

They managed to equalise in the 55th minute off their third penalty corner when Ritu's hit from top of the semi-circle bounced off the pads of the goalkeeper before Siti Zulaikha pushed the ball into goal.

Uniten coach Lailin Abu Hassan said his players dominated the match from start but wasted so many chances.

"We also failed to convert from the six penalty corners we earned in the match. It's frustrating to see my players missing sitters," said Lailin.

"It's not over for us as we'll face them again on Tuesday. I hope we can play better and collect full points to stay in contention for the league title."

Blue Warriors coach Zulkhairi Ariffin was also not pleased with his team's performance.

"We were a letdown in the first two quarters and we had to change our strategy. Fortunately, it paid off as we scored the equaliser.

"We managed to snatch a point and keep our chances alive for the league title," he said.

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