

Gritty Red Giants

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Selangor go top after come-from-behind win in first home tie



Eyes on the ball: Selangor's Patrick Wleh (left) in action against Sarawak's Davide Grassi during the Super League match at the Selayang Stadium yesterday. Selangor won 4-2. — M. AZHAR ARIF / The Star

By K. RAJAN

SELAYANG: Selangor showed they were made of sterner stuff in their first home match of the season by coming from behind to beat Sarawak 4-2 at the Selayang Municipal Stadium.

The win also sent the Red Giants top of the table over defending champions Johor Darul Tazim on goal difference with both teams tied on 10 points.

Last night, Selangor fell behind after Brazilian Juninho fired the Crocs ahead after just seven minutes.

R. Gopinathan drew level for the hosts in the 25th minute and there was no stopping them after that. Patrick Wleh (28th and 56th) and Mohd Azrif Nasrulhaq (66th) struck to put Selangor 4-1 up.

Sarawak's other Brazilian Gilmar Filho converted a spot-kick in the 76th minute to reduce the Giants' margin of victory.

Selangor coach Zainal Abidin Hassan made only one change in his line-up, bringing in versatile midfielder S. Veenod for injured Indonesian winger Andik Vermansyah.

The Giants, however, took too long to settle into the match just like in their last game against Pahang.

That allowed the Crocs to get off to a dream start as a fast counter-attack left the Selangor backline exposed with Juninho calmly slotting the ball past goalkeeper Norazlan Razali.

Sarawak coach Datuk K. Rajagopal's game plan, though, was disrupted after skipper Ronny Harun was stretchered off in the 20th minute after a collision with Gopinathan.

Defensive midfielder Ronny's replacement, Shreen Tambi, struggled to deal with the marauding runs of Selangor's attacking midfielders Mauro Olivi and Nazmi Faiz Mansor.

Winger Gopinathan led the home side's comeback, equalising from

Wleh's low cross inside the box in the 25th minute.

Wleh then stepped up to bag a brace in the 28th and 56th minutes. The Liberian hitman is now the Super League's leading scorer with five goals.

Rightback Azrif then capped a brilliant solo run with Selangor's fourth goal.

As the hosts sat back to savour their comfortable lead, skipper Mohd Shahrom Kalam conceded a penalty after handling the ball in the box.

Gilmar made no mistake from the spot to give Sarawak some consolation.



RESULTS & STANDINGS

SUPER LEAGUE

SELANGOR	4	SARAWAK	2
KEDAH	2	KELANTAN	1
PENANG	1	PERAK	1
T'GANU FC II	1	POLICE	1
JDT	2	FELDA UTD	1
PAHANG	1	TERENGGANU	2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SELANGOR	4	3	1	0	9	4	10
JDT	4	3	1	0	7	2	10
FELDA UTD	4	3	0	1	7	3	9
KEDAH	4	2	1	1	3	3	7
TERENGGANU	4	2	0	2	3	4	6
PENANG	4	1	2	1	7	5	5
KELANTAN	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
POLICE	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
PERAK	4	0	3	1	1	2	3
T'GANU FC II	4	0	2	2	3	7	2
SARAWAK	4	0	1	3	5	9	1
PAHANG	4	0	1	3	5	11	1



RESULT & STANDINGS

PREMIER LEAGUE

MALACCA	0	N. SEMBILAN	0				
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
K. LUMPUR	4	3	1	0	6	3	10
DRB HICOM	4	3	0	1	10	5	9
MALACCA	4	2	2	0	5	3	8
PERLIS	4	2	1	1	8	3	7
UITM FC	4	2	1	1	6	5	7
PKNS	4	2	0	2	6	4	6
N. SEMBILAN	4	1	3	0	5	3	6
KUANTAN FA	4	1	2	1	5	3	5
SIME DARBY	4	1	2	1	7	6	5
JDT II	4	1	0	3	7	7	3
SABAH	4	0	0	4	4	13	0
ARMED FORCES	4	0	0	4	2	16	0