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## Sabah women cruise into semifinals

By Lester J. Bingkasan

**KOTA KINABALU:** Sabah women team booked their semifinal spot in the 29th Tun Sharifah Rodziah Football Tournament after a 9-0 trouncing of Perlis in Sintok, Kedah yesterday.

Nurul Azurin Mazlan was the star player with four goals as Sabah are assured of a top finish with one remaining match to play in Group A. With four wins in as many games, Sabah are on 12 points with their nearest rivals Selangor, their next opponents, on seven points.

In yesterday's match at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Sabah showed their prowess by taking a five-goal lead in the first half.

Selangor-born Azurin, 16, who is enrolled at the Sabah Sports School (SSMS), was impressive from the start as she completed her hat-trick in the space of 20 minutes after kick-off.

It started in the ninth minute before Azurin added a second just two minutes later and the third on 19th minute.

It was 5-0 in Sabah's favour before the half-hour mark when Yastrika Laura Tumas (24th minute) and Shereilyn Elly Pius (27th minute) got their names on the score sheets.

There was no stopping Sabah in the second half with Shereilyn netting her second and Sabah's sixth on 47 minutes before Alesca Ungau and Jaciah Jamulis made it 8-0 with their 54th and 59th minutes efforts.

There was still time for Azurin to get a fourth goal and Sabah's ninth on 62nd minute that gave Sabah a place in the semifinals.

Head coach Smith M. Ampuling was impressed with the players attitude in getting the win against the weaker team in the group.

"I'm delighted to see that our



Azurin

players did not underestimate our opponents who are the weakest team in the group. Instead they played to their full ability.

"The huge score proved it all and I hope the latest win will further motivate and inject confidence into the side to face the semifinals," he said.

On the last group fixtures against Selangor, Smith said he would decide whether to rest some of the key players after securing the last four berths.

"I have to look into several aspects of things before making up my mind...we want to give other players the opportunity to play too but at the same time, we have to keep our winning momentum," Smith said.

Eleven-time champions Sabah had won against Negeri Sembilan 6-0, Sarawak 4-0 and the Armed Forces in their earlier Group A fixtures.

Meanwhile, a re-match of the 2015 final is on the cards as title holders are currently leading Group B with maximum 12 points.

The crossover semifinals, which will pit the group winners against the runners-up, will be played on April 14.