

Basketful of goodies

Victorious Negri cagers get houses and cash incentives



One for the album: The Negri Sembilan men and women's team posing for the camera after winning the double in the 61st Maba/Matrix Agong Cup basketball championships. For their feat, the players are expected to be rewarded by their sponsor and philanthropist Datuk Lee Tian Hock.

By LIM TEIK HUAT

PETALING JAYA: It pays to play basketball, especially if you are on the victorious Negri Sembilan state team.

All 12 players in the Negri men's team can look forward to getting a new terrace house as a reward for winning their fourth consecutive title in the 61st Maba/Matrix Agong Cup basketball championships in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday evening.

The men's team lifted the title by brushing aside Westports Malaysia Dragons 77-53.

The NS women's team, who had

earlier powered their way to a second straight title by beating Segamat 76-43, are in line for a handsome cash incentive as well. They could receive between RM50,000 and RM100,000 per person.

The Negri team, mostly powered by national cagers, were seen as the favourites and needed no reminder of the monetary rewards proposed by their main sponsor and philanthropist Datuk Lee Tian Hock.

Tian Hock, who is the Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd's founder and major shareholder, made a promise at the end of 2016 to reward

the players handsomely if they keep winning the title every year.

Negri won the title back in the inaugural year of Agong Cup in 1958 and have never won again until 2016.

The Negri team players were each rewarded with RM10,000 in 2016 and it went up to RM100,000 in 2017. Last year, they were presented a studio apartment unit each and a trip to Australia.

The players will now be eagerly waiting for the official announcement during the official celebration dinner later this month.

In the final, Ting Chun Hong top-

scored with 17 points and nine rebounds while American-born Perry Lim made a huge contribution with 11 points and a massive 21 rebounds.

Coach Brian Lester was happy with the overall performance of the players.

"They put in a lot of effort into each match. Westports are also worthy opponents in the final. Perry and Ting did well to push the team forward."

"We still need to improve our free throws and finishing under the basket, however," said the Australian coach.