

Jackpot for Negri cagers after winning national title

SEREMBAN: For bringing back the Agong's Cup after a lapse of 58 years, the Negri Sembilan basketball team has hit the jackpot.

Each of the 11 team members will be driving home a Toyota Vios, plus RM10,000 in cash as incentive – courtesy of property developer Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd.

Team captain Kuek Tian Yuan and coach Brian Joseph Lester will receive a Toyota Camry and RM20,000 each for their part in bringing glory to the state.

Matrix Concepts managing director Datuk Lee Tian Hock said the company decided to give away the prizes, costing more than RM1mil, to further motivate the players.

“Negri Sembilan won the inaugural tournament back in 1958 and emerged runner-up in the following year.

“After that, we never won the title until now,” he said at the prize-giving ceremony at the d'Tempat Country Club.

He said Kuek opted for RM130,000 cash instead of driving the car home.

In this year's edition held in Bintulu, Sarawak, Negri Sembilan edged Malacca 73-70.

Negri Sembilan was featured in Division One together with last year's champions Police, Sarawak, Malacca, Sabah and Selangor.

Johor, Penang, Armed Forces, Perak and a Selection Team made up of non-Chinese players battled in Division Two.

Lee, who is an avid basketball fan, said he began supporting the state basketball team about three years ago.

“We brought in an experienced coach and gave allowances to the players so that they will remain focused during training,” he said, adding that the move was also to promote and elevate the standard of their game.

National players representing the state were given RM4,000 a month, national reserves RM2,500 and youth players between RM1,500 and RM1,800.

As an added incentive, Matrix Concepts also paid the fees for its players pursuing tertiary education.

Lee said Matrix Concepts would pay each player a sum of RM100,000 if they could retain the title next year.

“If they win it for a third time, each of them will be given a two-room serviced apartment,” he said.



Joyous night: Team officials, coaches and the Negri Sembilan players celebrating their success during the prize-giving ceremony.