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# Simply arresting

## Young Negri stop seasoned Police to lift Agong Cup



**One for the album:** The Negri Sembilan players posing for the camera after winning the men's and women's titles in the Maba-Matrix 60th Agong Cup National Basketball Championships yesterday. — M. AZHAR ARIF / The Star

By JOASH EE DE SILVA

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Defending champions Negri Sembilan, powered by Wong Yi Hou, lifted the Maba-Matrix 60th Agong Cup National Basketball Championships in a dramatic final that saw youth prevail over experience at the Maba Stadium.

The young side put up a fiery show to beat the experienced Police 67-63 yesterday.

The 22-year-old Yi Hou ended the match with 20 points, five rebounds and three steals to lead Negri to their third consecutive title.

The troopers were guided by national veterans Chee Li Wei and Loh Shee Fai. Li Wei starred with 19

points, eight rebounds, three blocks while Shee Fai picked up 14 points.

Yi Hou, also a member of the team who won the last two years, said the victory yesterday was extra special.

"My teammates and I were under a lot of pressure before this tournament because many expected us to win and we didn't want to disappoint," said Yi Hou.

"Police are also a very experienced team with many former nationals, so it was our great teamwork that was the key to our success."

Yi Hou and the young side got off to a blistering start when they raced to a comfortable 14-4 lead after five minutes in the first quarter.

But experience slowly took hold of the game as Li Wei, who was dominant in the centre position, helped Police gain a 37-32 advantage at the end of the half.

Both teams started aggressively in the second half and it was Yi Hou who slowly found his footing in the match as he netted 15 points to put Negri back in the driver's seat.

In the dramatic and intense final minute, Police fought back through Li Wei and Shee Fai to regain the lead but two late shots from beyond the arc by Liew Wei Yuong and De Wee Yiang ensured Negri seal their third national title.

Yi Hou was delighted that he stepped up after a slow start.

"I was still a bit nervous in the first half, but I relaxed in the second. Everything came together from there," he said.

"I made a few important three-point shots which allowed my team to get back into the game.

"We worked hard throughout the year in preparation for this tournament and to win it makes it all worth it."

It was a perfect day for Negri as their women's team also bagged the national title.

In the competition played in a round-robin format, Negri finished top of the standings undefeated with four wins and eight points while Hatchers Sports Club were second with seven points.