

SCORING AGAINST ALL ODDS

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Dark clouds, thunder and lightning dominated the skies overlooking The Cage Sports Park on 1 April 2018, just as the 44th SMA-Goldplus Universal Inter-Hospital Soccer Tournament kicked off its first two matches of the day. Heavy rain soon pelted down onto the pitches, halting the games just as they started. What an April Fool's prank!

The soccer players, representing seven hospitals and private practices, sought refuge under the shelters set up beside the pitches and hoped for the lightning alert to be lifted and rain to subside. Thankfully, the rain eased into a drizzle in under half an hour and the players eagerly returned to the pitches to pit their skills against their colleagues' and vie for the championship title.

This year's inter-hospital soccer tournament adopted a different game format, away from the round-robin system that was previously used to determine the winning team. All seven teams had the privilege to play against every other institution as a result, which translated to consecutive back-breaking matches amid the already uncooperative rainy weather.

Poor weather conditions and slippery pitches resulted in multiple tied games and neck-to-neck match points. Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) and Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH) teams were strong contenders for

the championship title from the get-go, with the former surprisingly achieving consecutive wins even after the weather took a turn for the worse. After enduring six gruelling matches over a three-hour time frame, the TTSH team eventually claimed the championship title, proving that their poor performance at the 2017 inter-hospital soccer tournament was a thing of the past. Earning the most match points, they emerged victorious over the defending champions – KTPH, who ended up in the 1st runner-up position instead. The SingHealth 1 team gave TTSH and KTPH teams a run for their money with their goalkeeper, Dr Poh Kai Chin, saving countless goal attempts by their opponents. By the end of the tournament, even players from other teams were applauding

Dr Poh for his saves and deflections that were out of this world, and which placed SingHealth 1 team at its 2nd runner-up position. The top scorer of the 44th SMA-Goldplus Universal Inter-Hospital Soccer Tournament was awarded to Dr Kenneth Leong from TTSH, for his stunning scoresheet of four goals in this competition.

We would like to thank Goldplus Universal Pte Ltd for their generous sponsorship of the players' jerseys and tournament balls, as well as Red Bull Singapore for their much appreciated supply of drinks. ◆

Legend

- 1. The TTSH champion team after fighting hard to clinch the title
- 2. The KTPH team all ready for the tournament

Team	Results	No. of game points	No. of goals
Tan Tock Seng Hospital	Champion	11	8
Khoo Teck Puat Hospital	1st Runner-up	11	4
SingHealth 1	2nd Runner-up	10	4
Private Practice	4th Placing	9	2
SingHealth 2	5th Placing	6	0
Singapore Armed Forces	6th Placing	4	2
National University Health System	7th Placing	3	0

