

# Chelsea-Roma draw in thriller

London

**E**den Hazard and Edin Dzeko each scored twice as Chelsea rescued a thrilling

3-3 draw with Roma to stay top of Champions League Group C.

Chelsea had surrendered a two-goal lead to trail 3-2 with 20 minutes remaining after former Manchester City striker Dzeko's quick-fire double.

But Hazard headed in to prevent Antonio Conte's side slipping to a third

straight loss for the first time under the Italian's stewardship.

Hazard's first goal of the season followed David Luiz's opener but Aleksandar Kolarov halved the deficit before Dzeko's delightful volley and free header within seven second-half minutes.

Chelsea were second best, but Hazard headed in Pedro's cross to give the Blues seven points ahead of the trip to the Eternal City on Oct. 31.

The Blues were seeking a response to successive Premier League losses to Manchester City and Crystal Palace which have left the champions nine points adrift ahead of Saturday's fixture with Watford.

The Blues did not get the win they craved, but will have been boosted by the way they fought back after ceding the initiative to Roma.

Chelsea marked their Champions League return

after last season's European absence with a 6-0 win over Qarabag and followed that up with an impressive display in winning at Atletico Madrid.

A draw in Baku between those sides earlier on Wednesday gave Chelsea added incentive. Beat Roma here and they would have one foot in the knockout stages with three group games to play.

If only it were so simple. Luiz's deployment in midfield, with N'Golo Kante out injured, provided balance, while striker Alvaro Morata made a welcome return from his own hamstring injury, but Roma were better throughout.

Morata spurned an early chance, shooting straight at Alisson.

Diego Perotti shot over before Luiz struck against the run of play.

The Brazilian roamed forwards and, when his attempted pass to Morata was returned to him off Federico Fazio, he curled the ball in first time from 25 yards.

Roma's best fell chance fell for Radja Nainggolan, who momentarily escaped Luiz's attentions and ghosted down the Chelsea left.

Thibaut Courtois saved smartly and, soon afterwards, Chelsea doubled their lead.

Hazard fed Morata, whose shot looped up off the outstretched foot of ex-Tottenham defender Fazio and Hazard despatched the ball with ease. (espn.in)



David Luiz(L) of Chelsea competes



Lewis Hamilton (file pic)

Austin

**L**ewis Hamilton dismissed talk of him wrapping up a fourth world title at the United States Grand Prix this weekend as "silly".

The 32-year-old Briton can claim the 2017 crown if he is triumphant for Mercedes and nearest rival Sebastian Vettel of Ferrari fails to finish in the top five in Sunday's race at the Circuit of the Americas.

"Honestly, I don't know, all of the talk of a championship win here is silly really -- Sebastian won't have the same difficulties and he will be very quick.

"For me, it (the title) will be done in the last four races so my focus here is on winning.

"I don't mind if it is done here or at the last race, but the most important thing here is to win, in the midst of all that is going on in the country and that is a priority for me -- and you know what I am talking about."

Hamilton declined to

elaborate on his plans or the significance of his comments about why winning is such a priority for him. He suggested that a member of the media audience understood, without explaining.

When he was asked directly if he intended to take a knee in support of the protests by NFL players against racial injustice and police brutality, he distanced himself from some of his earlier comments on the subject.

"I've not given that much thought," he said, adding that when he had referred to a "gentleman at the front" who understood his thinking he was not considering the protest action. "I've worked hard to be here today and I have feelings about the whole situation, but at the moment I have no plans to do anything."

He added that if he was not to win the title in the United States, he would be happy to win it in Mexico, Brazil or Abu Dhabi. (AFP)

## Alonso staying at McLaren in 2018



Austin

**D**ouble world champion Fernando Alonso will stay with McLaren in 2018, the team said yesterday in a long-expected announcement that finally ended one of the sagas of the Formula One season.

McLaren did not say whether the new contract extended beyond next year.

The Spaniard has endured a miserable three years with the British-based former world champions and had refused to commit to staying until he felt they could provide him with a competitive car. McLaren have gone some way towards answering those doubts by ending a troubled partnership with Honda and switching to Renault engines in 2018.

"It's fantastic to be able to continue my relationship with everybody at McLaren. It was always where my heart was telling me to stay, and I really

feel at home here," the Spaniard said in a team statement at the U.S. Grand Prix.

"McLaren has the technical resource and financial strength to be able to very quickly win races and world championships in F1," added the 36-year-old, who won his two championships with Renault in 2005 and 2006.

"Although the last few years have not been easy, we have never forgotten how to win, and I believe we can achieve that again soon."

Alonso has not been on the podium since 2014, when he was with Ferrari. His last win was in Spain in 2013, again with the Italian team.

McLaren are currently ninth overall, out of 10 teams, and the season ranks as the worst of Alonso's career with the exception of his debut year with now-defunct tail-enders Minardi. (Reuters)