

Chelsea cruise into last 16



Chelsea's midfielder Eden Hazard is seen in action during the UEFA Champions League Group C football match against Qarabag

Baku
Chelsea powered into the Champions League last 16 as Eden Hazard and Willian inspired a 4-0 thrashing of 10-man Qarabag on Wednesday.

Antonio Conte's side reached the knockout stages with a game to spare thanks to influential displays from Hazard and Willian at the Olympic Stadium that knocked Azerbaijanis Qarabag out of the competition.

Chelsea will go into their last Group C fixture against Atletico Madrid, who take on Roma at the Wanda Metropolitano later on Wednesday, on 10 points and still in with a chance of finishing top.

Hazard scored Chelsea's first-half opener from the penalty spot

after his pass to Willian provoked a foul on the Brazilian from Rashad Sadygov, who was sent off as a result.

Willian doubled Chelsea's lead nine minutes before the interval, collecting Hazard's deft back-heeled pass before rolling home.

Cesc Fabregas netted Chelsea's third from the spot in the 73rd minute after another foul on Willian, and the Brazil international crashed home his second in the closing moments.

The English champions were heavily criticised after a woeful loss at Roma in their previous Champions League match, but have now won three in a row in all competitions.

"We did everything well. We

should have scored more. It is easy to play with these good players," Hazard said.

"We have a big game at Liverpool on Saturday so it was good to have a small rest. We are ready for Saturday."

Conte had bemoaned the fixture schedule that sends Chelsea to Liverpool for a crucial Premier League game on Saturday, just 48 hours after they return to London from the 5,000 mile (8,000 kilometres) round trip to Azerbaijan.

But he still fielded a strong side, with David Luiz starting in defence for the first time since being dropped after a reported training ground row with the Blues boss following the Roma defeat. (AFP)

Karters set to return to action at BIKC

Manama

Bahrain International Karting Circuit (BIKC) hosts the second round of the 2017/2018 Bahrain Karting Sprints Championship today in Sakhir.

The meeting will see action in both the Bahrain Rotax Mojo Max Championship (BRMMC) and the Bahrain Sodi Sprint SWS Championship (BSSWS).

The BRMMC is for Rotax kart owners and they compete in different classes. The BSSWS is an arrive-and-drive competition that has all participants racing on identical Sodi karts.

Action is set to be held along BIKC's 1.414-kilometre Commission Internationale de Karting (CIK) Track. All are welcome to attend and cheer for the island's top talent.

The BRMMC kicks things off with a practice session at 3pm. Qualifying

will then be held from 4pm, with the Pre-Final set for 4.55pm and the Final scheduled for 6.15pm.

The BSSWS gets things going with Qualifying at 3.35pm. The Pre-Final will then be held from 4.30pm and the Final will begin at 5.40pm.

All the racing will be followed by the podium ceremony.

This year's BKSC is set to feature five rounds. The season-opener took place several weeks back, with Rashid Almuammari taking victory in the BRMMC and Yousef Khamiri winning in the SSWS.

Round three is scheduled for January 5, round four on March 2 and the championship finale will be held on April 6.

For more information on the upcoming Bahrain SWS Sprint Championship or other activities at BIKC, call +973-1745-1745 or visit www.bahrain-karting.com.

Griezmann stunner helps keep Atletico Champions League hopes alive



Atletico's Antoine Griezmann scores the opening goal

Madrid

Antoine Griezmann's spectacular scissors-kick helped earn Atletico Madrid a 2-0 win over Roma on Wednesday (Nov 22) to keep alive their slim hopes of qualifying for the Champions League last 16.

The striker scored his first goal in nine games in the 69th minute before setting up Kevin Gameiro for the second in the closing stages to silence his critics.

Diego Simeone rotated his side, appearing almost to give up on qualification, but the 2014 and 2016 finalists stayed true to their motto, 'Never stop believing', to earn their first win of the competition and take things down to the final match of the group phase on Dec 5.

Atletico are two points behind Roma

and must beat group leaders Chelsea at Stamford Bridge and hope Qarabag get at least a draw in Italy if the Spanish side are to qualify.

Simeone chose to play midfielder Thomas Partey at right back, replacing Juanfran, who was ruled out shortly before the game with a hamstring injury.

Key defender Diego Godin was rested while Stefan Savic's suspension meant Lucas Hernandez joined Jose Gimenez at the back - an untested pairing in a makeshift defence.

At the other end veteran striker Fernando Torres, handed his first start since the opening day of the season in August, struggled to make an impact, while both Antoine Griezmann and Koke failed to reach Yannick Carrasco's dangerous low cross. (Reuters)