

## Johnson Leads L'Aquila

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USA forward Nic Johnson has been hitting good form for L'Aquila in Italy, at just the right time.

Johnson scored a try for his club Saturday against Mantovani Lazio and was named Man of the Match in L'Aquila's 31-24 victory. Johnson's try put his side up 17-13 in the first half.

Johnson joined L'Aquila midway through the Eccellenza league season. At the time they were just six points out of the relegation spot, in 9th. And while they are still 9th since Johnson's arrival, they now have a 20-point cushion over Venezia, thanks in alrge part to Johnson's play.

"It is nice to get the win, that is why I play," said the former Denver Barbarian. "Playing well is just the icing on the cake. It has been really up and down here, and the team is really looking to finish on a high note. We are safe from relegation, but still want to finish higher than where we are. The club is relieved that we are not going down, because of all the sponsorship that is involved."

The team has two weeks left and will need two big wins to catch Lazio or Mogliano (and another Eagle, Lou Stanfill), but they need one of those teams to start losing big as well. Johnson has been a bright spot on an inconsistent team, with one local newspaper headline proclaiming that L'Aquila can't win with only on Nic Johnson.

"They are happy with my performances, and I am happy to play rugby every day," said Johnson, who is also concerned about how his club finishes. "There are two weeks left and we are just trying to keep everyone motivated and focused on the next game."

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