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Smithfield



ARIC ALMIROLA Giving Back in Fontana

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (Feb. 24, 2020) – The No. 10 Smithfield Ford Mustang team for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) heads to the second stop of this year’s three-race “NASCAR Goes West” swing with Sunday’s NASCAR Cup Series Auto Club 400 at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California.

This time, Almirola and the No. 10 Smithfield Ford team have some work to do to move up in the point standings. Last weekend at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Almirola saw the promise of a top-10 start fall by the wayside when his left-rear fender was damaged when a car made contact with his under caution. He was able to finish the race 21st and on the lead lap, but it hasn’t been the start to the season the team has been looking for. The week before, at the season-opening Daytona 500, Almirola ran up front and had potential to visit victory lane until he was involved in a late-race accident.



“We certainly had a car fast enough for a top-10 (at Las Vegas) and we did everything we could to adjust it and make it better,” Almirola said. “We made some gains and learned a lot. That damaged fender and cut tire put us off course for a decent points day and we have some making up to do at Auto Club this weekend after a tough two weeks.”

Last year, Almirola earned his first top-10 in 12 starts at Fontana after leading seven laps and running in and around the top-10 for the majority of the race. Crew chief Mike Bugarewicz has called the shots in four starts at Fontana with a best finish of third with Clint Bowyer in 2017.

“We ran well there last year and I’m confident we can do it again,” Almirola said. “We just need a few things to go our way to get us on the right track and build momentum. I know our Smithfield team is capable of it.”

Almirola has career totals of two wins, two poles, 18 top-five finishes, 61 top-10s and 543 laps led in 318 starts. His last win came in October 2018 at Talladega (Ala.) Super Speedway.

In addition to the on-track action, Smithfield and Almirola are teaming up to surprise the students at Joe Baca Middle School in Bloomington, CA with a \$10,000 donation to further support the education and growth of their students on Friday morning.

Media is invited to attend the assembly where Almirola will lead a Q&A session speaking to his personal life experiences, meet the students, and sign autographs. To close out the event, he will present a \$10,000 check donation to support the school’s creation of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Lab.

This assembly is the first of a series of community visits led by Smithfield and Almirola to support the academic advancement of students across the nation, while providing them with the tools and resources needed for success.

The Tampa native will again sport the iconic black, white and gold No. 10 Smithfield Ford Mustang this weekend.

Smithfield Foods, Inc., who will sponsor a majority of the races this season, is an American food company with agricultural roots and a global reach. Its 40,000 U.S. employees are dedicated to producing “Good food. Responsibly®” and have made it one of the world’s leading vertically integrated protein companies. It has pioneered sustainability standards for more than two decades, including many industry firsts, such as an ambitious commitment to cut carbon impact by 25 percent by 2025. The company believes in the power of protein to end food insecurity and has donated hundreds of millions of food servings to neighbors in need. For more information, visit www.smithfieldfoods.com, and connect on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Almirola is back with season two of his documentary series Beyond the 10, where fans can get VIP, behind-the-scenes access by subscribing to his YouTube channel. Episodes showcase never-before-seen footage of Almirola at the racetrack, on family trips, and “A Day in the Life” during the week, as well as all that goes into a NASCAR Cup Series driver’s season. Click [here](#) to subscribe on YouTube and watch the latest episode.

He enters the third race of the season 17th in the standings with 48 points, 37 out of first place. He’ll look to shake off the bad luck from the first two weeks and advance in the point standings or secure a playoff position with a trip to victory lane.

ARIC ALMIROLA, Driver of the No. 10 Smithfield Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

Is the West Coast swing one of the most difficult stretches of races throughout the season?

“This is where it really becomes the grind. You go out to Vegas, you come back home, then go back out two more times. The jet lag is really starting to set in and, when you wake up, you’re trying to figure out when you wake up in the morning what time zone you’re in, and then you have to go back and do it one more time. Some of the crew guys stay out on the West Coast but, with me having a 6- and a 5-year-old and wife at home, I’ve been going back and forth. This coast-to-coast travel definitely turns into a grind.”

What kind of racing can we expect this weekend at Auto Club Speedway?

“The racing is going to be incredible at Auto Club Speedway. The restarts have always been really wild and the track is really wide, so it promotes five-wide racing on the restarts. Now, with this new rules package, you’re going to see us all over the place. We’re going to be four- and five-wide for multiple laps in a row. I think it’s going to be insane and I’m excited. Any time you see the racing get crazy like that, it’s an opportunity. Hopefully, we can get our Smithfield Ford Mustang positioned up front and they are doing four- and five-wide behind us and we can race off into the sunset.”

ARIC ALMIROLA’S AUTO CLUB PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2019	2/20	Auto Club 400	3	9	Running, 200/200	7	N/A
2018	3/18	Auto Club 400	27	12	Running, 199/200	0	N/A
2017	3/26	◇Auto Club 400	31	19	Running, 202/202	0	N/A
2016	3/20	◇Auto Club 400	25	21	Running, 205/205	0	N/A
2015	3/22	×Auto Club 400	23	11	Running, 209/209	0	\$141,546
2014	3/23	×Auto Club 400	21	43	Accident, 68/206	0	\$98,351
2013	3/24	Auto Club 400	23	14	Running, 200/200	0	\$136,516
2012	3/25	*Auto Club 400	28	25	Running, 128/129	0	\$124,016
2010	2/21	Auto Club 400	24	43	Engine, 34/250	0	\$80,347
2009	2/22	Auto Club 500	31	35	Engine, 242/250	0	\$91,475
2008	8/31	Pepsi 500	10	30	Running, 249/250	0	\$124,533
2007	9/2	Cal 500	40	31	Running, 248/250	0	\$97,200

* Race cut short due to weather. × Race length extended due to green-white-checked finish.

= Qualifying canceled due to weather, starting position set via practice speed. ◇ Race length was extended due to overtime finish

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