



# Smithfield



## Almirola Finishes 21<sup>st</sup> at Vegas

*Smithfield Ford Driver's Top-10 Hopes Derailed by Cut Tire After Contact*

**Date:** Feb. 23, 2020  
**Event:** Las Vegas 400  
**Series:** NASCAR Cup Series  
**Location:** Las Vegas Motor Speedway (1.5-mile oval)  
**Format:** 267 laps, broken into three stages (80 laps/80 laps/107 laps)  
**Start/Finish:** 14<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> (Running, completed 267 of 267 laps)  
**Point Standing:** 17<sup>th</sup> (48 points, 37 out of first)

**Race Winner:** Joey Logano of Team Penske (Ford)  
**Stage 1 Winner:** Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)  
**Stage 2 Winner:** Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)

### Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-80):

- Aric Almirola started 14<sup>th</sup>, finished 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Almirola pitted during the lap-25 competition caution for four tires, fuel and air pressure and chassis adjustments, and gained three spots on pit road.
- He noted that the Smithfield Ford had trouble turning after the adjustments were made.
- He pitted the No. 10 Ford at the end of the stage for four tires, fuel and adjustments to correct the handling issues.

### Stage 2 Recap (Laps 81-160):

- Started 12<sup>th</sup> and finished 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Almirola aggressively drove to the middle of three cars and advanced back to the top-10.
- He pitted under green on lap 120 from 11<sup>th</sup> for four fresh tires, fuel and adjustments. He said his Smithfield Ford's front tires needed more grip.
- Almirola was scored 11<sup>th</sup> after pit stops cycled through.
- He pitted at the conclusion of the stage for four tires, fuel and more adjustments.

### Stage 3 Recap (Laps 161-267):

- Started 11<sup>th</sup> and finished 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Almirola pitted on lap 177 under caution for four fresh tires and fuel.
- He restarted 21<sup>st</sup> and quickly made his way back to the top-15.
- Almirola radioed to crew chief Mike Bugarewicz that he was contacted by the No. 6 car under caution.
- After noting tight-handling conditions, he cut a tire on lap 208, then pitted for four tires and damage repair.
- He returned to pit road two laps down in 28<sup>th</sup> before the caution was called on lap 221, where Almirola gained a lap back.
- Almirola returned back on the lead lap on lap 262.
- During the final restart, Almirola avoided a multicar accident and gained multiple spots before crossing the finish line.

### Notes:

- Joey Logano won the Las Vegas 400 to score his 24<sup>th</sup> career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his first of the season and his second at Las Vegas. He beat second-place Matt DiBenedetto as the race ended under caution.
- This was Ford's series-leading 13<sup>th</sup> NASCAR Cup Series victory at Las Vegas and its 687<sup>th</sup> all-time NASCAR Cup Series win.
- There were nine caution periods for a total of 37 laps.
- Twenty-four of the 38 drivers in the Las Vegas 400 finished on the lead lap.
- Ryan Blaney leaves Las Vegas as the championship leader with a three-point advantage over second-place Logano.

### Aric Almirola, driver of the No. 10 Smithfield Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

"We had a car capable of running in and around the top-10 today. We tried a lot of adjustments to hang in there, then the No. 6 car hit us under caution and we cut a tire with about 60 to go that put us a few laps down. That's not the way we wanted to start the West Coast swing, but we'll head to Fontana with our heads held high and brush it off."

### Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Auto Club 400 on Sunday, March 1, at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California. The race starts at 3:30 p.m. EST with live coverage provided by FOX and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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