

# 10

# Smithfield



## ARIC ALMIROLA

### No. 10 Team Finding Strengths Heading to Phoenix

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (March 3, 2020) – Aric Almirola and the No. 10 Smithfield Ford team for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) enter the season’s first race on a mile oval Sunday at Phoenix Raceway fresh off and eighth-place finish last Sunday at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California.



Over the offseason, crew chief Mike Bugarewicz moved from SHR’s No. 14 team with Clint Bowyer to the No. 10 team with Almirola. After three 2020 starts, the team is confident heading to Phoenix after running as high as fourth at Fontana and putting together a respectable top-10 finish in its Ford Mustang.

“I thought we had a top-five car in Fontana and we just kept giving away all of our track position,” Almirola said. “We have to do better, but we are building and we got a top-10 and we will take that and move on. I think we have a lot of potential. I think Buga (Bugarewicz) and all the guys did a great job with our Smithfield Ford Mustang and I felt like we had a top-10 car going into the race and we proved that.”

Statistically speaking at Phoenix, it would be safe to forecast another strong run for the No. 10 Ford team this weekend. In three of Almirola’s last four Cup Series starts at the desert oval, he has earned two top-five finishes and another top-10.

Of Almirola’s 62 top-10s earned in 319 career Cup Series starts, 19 have been at tracks a mile in length or shorter. In 18 career starts at Phoenix, Almirola has totaled two top-four finishes, four top-10s and has led 26 laps. He has an average finish of 12.7 there and is ranked ninth among all drivers in the last 10 races.

“We still have a lot to learn as a team, but we’re on the right track,” Almirola said. “We still need a bit more to compete for wins every weekend and I’m thankful for the guys and girls at Stewart-Haas who have worked so hard during the offseason to make sure we start strong, and we have.”

Almirola has certainly excelled in his seven NASCAR Xfinity Series starts at Phoenix, having captured the pole in November 2011 to go with 74 laps led and a pair of top-10 finishes. Earlier in his career, Almirola made three starts in the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series at the “Diamond in the Desert.” Two of those three starts resulted in top-five finishes, and he led a total of 52 laps.

Almirola has career totals of two wins, two poles, 18 top-five finishes, 62 top-10s and 543 laps led in 319 starts. His last win came in October 2018 at Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway.

Smithfield Foods, Inc., who will sponsor Almirola’s car this weekend and at the majority of 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. For more information, visit [www.smithfieldfoods.com](http://www.smithfieldfoods.com), and connect on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Almirola continues to provide fans with content from 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.

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The Smithfield Ford driver looks to build on his short-track success this weekend looks to add his sixth-top 10 at Phoenix, third top-five or, the ultimate prize, a win in the desert.

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

**What makes Phoenix so unique?**

“Phoenix is just a fast short track. Ever since the repave, it races like a mile-and-a-half, which is different from a Richmond-, Martinsville- or Bristol-type of short track. It’s a fun race and I always look forward to heading out West to Phoenix.”

**What’s the most important thing to be successful at Phoenix?**

“You have to have everything at Phoenix. You have to have downforce, grip in your car and good brakes. You have to make sure your car turns well across the center of turns one and two, which is a sharp, banked corner. And then you have turns three and four, which are really fast and sweeping and flat. You’ve got to have a car that’s versatile and is a good compromise for both corners.”

**ARIC ALMIROLA’S PHOENIX PERFORMANCE PROFILE**

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
<b>2019</b>	11/10	Bluegreen Vacations 500k	11	22	Running, 310/312	0	N/A
	3/11	Ticket Guardian 500k	14	4	Running, 312/312	26	N/A
<b>2018</b>	11/11	Can-Am 500k	18	4	Running, 312/312	0	N/A
	3/11	Ticket Guardian 500k	22	7	Running, 312/312	0	N/A
<b>2017</b>	3/19	◇Good Sam 500k	28	17	Running, 314/314	0	N/A
	11/12	Can-Am 500k	22	9	Running, 312/312	0	N/A
<b>2016</b>	3/13	◇Good Sam 500k	14	13	Running, 313/313	0	N/A
	11/13	◇Can-Am 500k	27	22	Running, 322/324	0	N/A
<b>2015</b>	3/15	CampingWorld.com 500k	32	19	Running, 312/312	0	\$116,091
	11/15	*Race for Heroes 500k	17	10	Running, 219/219	0	\$134,126
<b>2014</b>	3/2	The Profit on CNBC 500k	9	15	Running, 312/312	0	\$119,066
	11/9	Phoenix 500k	23	18	Running, 312/312	0	\$117,476
<b>2013</b>	3/3	×Subway Fresh Fit 500k	18	15	Running, 316/316	0	\$117,886
	11/10	AdvoCare 500k	21	19	Running, 312/312	0	\$116,396
<b>2012</b>	3/4	Subway Fresh Fit 500k	18	12	Running, 312/312	0	\$116,211
	11/11	×AdvoCare 500k	5	16	Running, 319/319	0	\$112,346
<b>2010</b>	11/14	Kobalt Tools 500k	9	27	Running, 310/312	0	\$108,590
<b>2007</b>	11/11	Checker Auto Parts 500k	28	26	Running, 311/312	0	\$75,575

\* 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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