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# Smithfield



## Almirola Finishes 12th at Darlington

***Smithfield/#GoodFoodChallenge Ford Driver Runs Top-Five Before Penalty Derails Day***

**Date:** May 17, 2020  
**Event:** The Real Heroes 400  
**Series:** NASCAR Cup Series  
**Location:** Darlington (S.C) Raceway (1.366-mile oval)  
**Format:** 293 laps, broken into three stages (90 laps/95 laps/108 laps)  
**Start/Finish:** 5<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> (Running, completed 293 of 293 laps)  
**Point Standing:** 7<sup>th</sup> (151 points, 67 out of first)

**Race Winner:** Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)  
**Stage 1 Winner:** William Byron of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)  
**Stage 2 Winner:** Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)

### Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-90):

- Aric Almirola started fifth and finished sixth, earning five bonus points.
- The No. 10 Smithfield/#GoodFoodChallenge Ford Mustang fell outside of the top-10 and Almirola raced his way back to eighth before the lap-30 competition caution. He took four tires, fuel and air pressure adjustments.
- During the restart, Almirola raced his way to sixth place.
- Spotter Joel Edmonds told Almirola he was turning top-three lap times on lap 86.
- At the end of the stage, Almirola pitted for four tires, fuel and wedge adjustments. He said he needed more front turn.

### Stage 2 Recap (Laps 91-185):

- Almirola started seventh and finished 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The No. 10 Smithfield/#GoodFoodChallenge Ford Mustang raced to the top-five in the opening laps.
- On lap 112, the caution was called with Aric in the seventh position. He pitted for four tires, fuel and adjustments.
- Almirola pitted again on lap 125 under caution from 10<sup>th</sup> place for four tires, fuel and more chassis adjustments.
- Another caution was called on lap 154. Almirola pitted for four tires, fuel and reversed prior adjustments.
- He was handed an uncontrolled tire penalty and was demoted to the rear of the field.
- Almirola raced back to 21<sup>st</sup> before the stage ended. He took four tires, fuel and adjustments following Stage 1

### Final Stage Recap (Laps 186-293):

- Almirola started 21<sup>st</sup> and finished 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Almirola said the No. 10 Smithfield/#GoodFoodChallenge Ford Mustang was building tighter at lap 202.
- He pitted under caution on lap 216 for four tires, fuel and adjustments from the 17<sup>th</sup> position.
- On lap 243, Almirola and the No. 10 Ford team began to see top-five lap speeds.
- Almirola pitted on lap 255 for four fresh tires, fuel and adjustments and came off pit road 16<sup>th</sup>.
- He gained four spots on the final restart and raced just outside of the top-10 before the checkered flag waved.

### Notes:

- This was Almirola's third straight top-12. He finished eighth March 1 at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California, and eighth in the series' last race at Phoenix.
- Almirola's 12<sup>th</sup>-place result was just shy of bettering his previous best finish at Darlington – 11<sup>th</sup>, earned in the 2015 Southern 500.
- Almirola finished sixth in Stage 1 to earn five bonus points.
- There were 10 caution periods for a total of 57 laps.
- Only 24 of the 40 drivers in The Real Heroes 400 finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Darlington with a 28-point advantage over second-place Bowman.

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

“It was a decent day for us. When we had track position we ran up front. That was nice. Then we lost track position and got put to the

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back of the field. We just had to fight and climb our way back up for the rest of the race, but I'm really proud of my guys and I thought we had a top-10 car. We scored some stage points and had a solid day. I'm proud of everybody. I'm proud of NASCAR being the first sport to get things going again. It was kind of eerie to walk out to pit road and not see anyone in the grandstands, but it sure felt good to get back in the race car and that thrill of competition was much needed. I hope everybody enjoyed it and I hope everybody got their fix on sports from watching us race. We're one step closer back to normal. We'll try again here Wednesday night and see if we can't get it done. Congrats to Harvick on the win."

**Next Up:**

The NASCAR Cup Series returns to Darlington on Wednesday, May 20 for a 500-kilometer race. It starts at 7:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FS1 and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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