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Smithfield



ARIC ALMIROLA The Return of Short-Track Racing

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (May 29, 2020) – Aric Almirola and the No. 10 Smithfield Ford Mustang team for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) continue their return to racing after the COVID-19 postponements with a fan and driver favorite – short-track competition at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway.

Sunday, avid and new fans of the NASCAR Cup Series will get the chance to witness the typically action-packed, 500-lap race that will test the physical and mental stamina of its drivers.

“Bristol is the ultimate test of physical stamina mixed with finesse of how you position your racecar,” Almirola said. “You’re on the edge of your seat every lap and the slightest mistake can set you back. It helps to be in great shape for races like Bristol when you get toward the end of the long, green-flag run. During the break, I stayed busy with my workout regimen to prepare for races like this with heat training and cycling.”



After four races in 12 days, Almirola and the Smithfield Ford team are excited to mix up the racing styles and get back to short-track racing – something they think the fans will enjoy.

“NASCAR has done such an incredible job getting us back racing,” Almirola said. “We’re one of the only sports to watch right now and Sunday will be a prime time for new fans to see what NASCAR is all about. They’re going to see beating and banging the entire race, cars barely holding on, and frustration from a lot of us drivers. I think we’re going to gain a lot of new race fans Sunday and I hope the No. 10 Smithfield car is up front to gain some new fans for ourselves.”

Almirola’s 2019 outcomes at Bristol were not favorable for the 36-year-old – not of his own fault. After a solid sixth-place qualifying run in the April 2019 Bristol event, Almirola was struck by the No. 24 car and taken out of the race on lap three. Following another solid fifth-place qualifying effort in the August race, Almirola made contact with a lapped car that ultimately led him to finish 18 laps off the pace.

“Bristol is a track I always look forward to going to,” Almirola said. “We just haven’t had luck on our side the last few races there. I feel confident there, too. We just need some things to go our way to actually finish a solid race.”

Almirola and the Smithfield Ford team have restarted the season with one top-10 and have held their ninth-place position in the standings with 225 points – 106 behind leader Kevin Harvick.

He has one top-five and three top-10s in 20 starts at Bristol since 2007. His best finish there was third in the Food City 500 on March 16, 2004. In addition to his Cup Series experience at Bristol, Almirola has seven NASCAR Xfinity Series starts with four of those resulting in top-10 finishes.

Almirola will sport the iconic black, white and gold Smithfield Ford Mustang this weekend at Bristol. Smithfield Foods Inc., who will sponsor Almirola’s car 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.

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The starting grid for Sunday's race was determined Friday by random draw in order of owner points positions. Almirola will start the Food City Presents the Supermarket Heroes 500 from second.

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

How does Bristol's track surface change during the race?

"Bristol is one of those places where the track changes throughout the run, especially in the last couple of years, when they put the (traction) compound down on the bottom groove. That has tended to get rubbered up and get really slick as the run moves on and the cars migrate to the top of the racetrack. The top of the racetrack is not very good when it's clean but, when it starts to rubber up, it actually gains momentum and gets faster, so the groove moves around a lot from run to run and throughout the run, and that makes it fun and it makes it exciting. As a driver, it gives you the option to search around and look for speed."

Sunday's race honors Supermarket Heroes. How important is it to recognize these essential workers in the midst of the Coronavirus outbreak?

"The food workers are every bit as important as the front-line workers. We have to have food to survive as a nation and we have to have medical resources. You can't have just one or the other. I think it's so cool that we are acknowledging them this weekend because they are the heartbeat of our nation. We wake up every day for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Without them, we don't have that."

ARIC ALMIROLA'S CHARLOTTE PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2019	4/7	Food City 500	6	37	Accident, 3/500	0	N/A
		Bass Pro Shops NRA Night Race	5	29	Accident/482/500	0	N/A
2018	4/16	Food City 500	19	6	Running, 500/500	0	N/A
	8/18	Bass Pro Shops NRA Night Race	8	31	Running, 428/500	0	N/A
2017	4/24	†Food City 500	18	22	Running, 497/500	0	N/A
	8/19	Bass Pro Shops NRA Night Race	28	37	Accident, 390/500	0	N/A
2016	4/17	Food City 500	22	34	Running, 479/500	0	N/A
	8/21	Bass Pro Shops NRA Night Race	17	14	Running, 500/500	0	N/A
2015	4/19	×Food City 500	30	13	Running, 511/511	0	\$134,176
	8/22	Irwin Tools Night Race	31	17	Running, 497/500	0	\$150,171
2014	3/16	×Food City 500	23	3	Running, 503/503	0	\$160,161
	8/23	Irwin Tools Night Race	42	41	Accident, 123/500	0	\$116,101
2013	3/17	Food City 500	20	37	Accident, 245/500	0	\$125,439
	8/24	Irwin Tools Night Race	10	15	Running, 499/500	0	\$146,041
2012	3/18	Food City 500	7	19	Running, 498/500	0	\$127,446
	8/25	=Irwin Tools Night Race	5	35	Accident, 235/500	0	\$127,116
2010	3/21	Food City 500	27	39	Brakes, 59/500	0	\$80,650
2009	3/22	×Food City 500	18	35	Running, 494/503	0	\$91,825
2008	3/16	×†Food City 500	16	8	Running, 506/506	0	\$126,483
	8/23	Sharpie 500	23	13	Running, 500/500	0	\$136,733
2007	8/25	Sharpie 500	35	36	Running, 485/500	0	\$91,890

* 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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