

10

Smithfield



ARIC ALMIROLA

Same Track, Much Different Race at Charlotte

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (May 25, 2020) – Aric Almirola and the No. 10 Smithfield Ford Mustang team for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) will head back to Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway Wednesday night for its second of back-to-back races at the 1.5-mile oval.



Almirola and the No. 10 Smithfield Ford team endured a difficult evening at Sunday's Coca-Cola 600. After starting in the rear from adjustments made on the car after slight contact with the wall in qualifying, the No. 10 team persevered and made its way back to the top-10 after 398 laps. On the final restart, Almirola was shuffled to the middle lane with no help and finished 16th. If it weren't for the final caution, Almirola would have been the highest-finishing SHR driver and third-highest Ford driver.

As the Smithfield Ford team heads back to the 1.5-mile oval, it will take some things it learned from Sunday night's race and apply it to Wednesday night's 208-lap race, which is nearly half of the Coca Cola 600's.

"Sunday was a long day," Almirola said. "We battled loose-handling conditions, then neutral, then extremely tight conditions with those long runs and it made it so difficult to pass. We won't have those same issues coming back here on Wednesday with the stage lengths being so much shorter, so that's something that we'll have to adapt to. It's nearly half of Sunday's race, so you're going to see completely different strategies from teams."

Almirola will again run a special red, white and blue patriotic paint scheme with Smithfield adorning the hood. 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.

Last weekend, Almirola ran the same patriotic paint scheme that featured United States Army SPC Seth Blevins, who paid the ultimate sacrifice in 2011 in Eastern Kunar Province, Afghanistan, when his vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

"It was a big deal," Almirola said. "I was honored to have him and his family on my car. We get to do whatever we want, whenever we want, because he paid the ultimate sacrifice."

The 36-year-old Almirola has eight NASCAR Xfinity Series starts at Charlotte and garnered one top-five finish, three top-10s and has completed 99.4 percent of all possible laps. He also has two Charlotte starts in the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series, which both resulted in top-10 finishes.

Almirola has three top-10s this season and sits 11th in the driver standings with 207 points – 82 behind first-place SHR teammate Kevin Harvick.

After a rollercoaster of difficulties and perseverance Sunday night, Almirola has a simple approach to his second Charlotte race in three days.

"We'll regroup and get 'em on Wednesday night," he said. "We did it in Darlington."

-more-

ARIC ALMIROLA, Driver of the No. 10 Smithfield Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:**Will there be takeaways from the Coke 600 to apply to a race with almost half the laps?**

“Yes and no. We’re still racing at night, so that applies, but we won’t see those extremely long runs. The team and I have to take our notes from shorter runs similar to what we’ll see Wednesday night. It will be action-packed, and track position and perfection on pit road will be even more important because there won’t be many laps to catch up.”

What do you do to prepare yourself for four races in 11 days?

“I’ve done a lot of heat training and I stay extremely active on my bike at home. It’s something I have always seen as a boost to my career. I know I’m physically prepared when I get in that car and, at the end of the race, I feel hydrated and ready to go.”

ARIC ALMIROLA’S CHARLOTTE PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2020	5/25	Coca-Cola 600	40	16	Running, 405/405	0	N/A
2019	5/26	Coca-Cola 600	2	11	Running, 400/400	0	N/A
2018	9/13	Coca-Cola 600	9	13	Running, 399/400	0	N/A
	9/30	Bank of America Roval 400	20	19	Running, 109/109	0	N/A
2017	10/8	×Bank of America 500	24	24	Running, 337/337	0	N/A
2016	5/29	Coca-Cola 600	20	26	Running, 395/400	0	N/A
	10/9	Bank of America 500	33	15	Running, 334/334	0	N/A
2015	5/24	Coca-Cola 600	21	17	Running, 399/400	0	\$146,046
	10/11	Bank of America 500	9	10	Running, 334/334	0	\$133,651
2014	5/25	Coca-Cola 600	13	11	Running, 400/400	0	\$154,546
	10/11	Bank of America 500	15	22	Running, 332/334	0	\$116,276
2013	5/26	Coca-Cola 600	18	33	Accident, 324/400	0	\$131,066
	10/12	Bank of America 500	11	23	Running, 331/334	0	\$114,796
2012	5/27	Coca-Cola 600	1	16	Running, 398/400	4	\$177,466
	10/13	Bank of America 500	17	12	Running, 333/334	0	\$119,146

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

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

-TSC-

Contact Dakota Hunter with True Speed Communication

Dakota.Hunter@TrueSpeedCommunication.com

www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com • Online Media Kit available at: www.TrueSpeedMedia.com