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Smithfield



Almirola Finishes 16th at Charlotte

Smithfield Ford Driver Earns Third-Straight Top-16 at Charlotte Oval

Date: May 24, 2020
Event: Coca-Cola 600 (Round 7 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway (1.5-mile oval)
Format: 400 laps, broken into four stages (100 laps/100 laps/100 laps/100 laps)
Start/Finish: 40th/16th (Running, completed 405 of 405 laps)
Point Standing: 11th (207 points, 82 out of first)
Note: Race extended five laps past its scheduled 400-lap distance due to a green-white-checked finish.

Race Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Alex Bowman of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Alex Bowman of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 3 Winner: Joey Logano of Team Penske (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-100):

- Aric Almirola started 40th and finished 20th.
- Before the green flag waved, the No. 11 car dropped debris on the track, which made contact with Almirola's splitter causing damage.
- Almirola advanced the No. 10 Smithfield Ford to 27th before the lap-20 competition caution.
- Inclement weather delayed the race for 68 minutes on lap 49. When racing resumed, the No. 10 team pitted for four tires, fuel, air pressure and chassis adjustments, and repaired splitter damage.
- Almirola advanced to 20th by lap 89 and continued to note loose-handling conditions.
- He pitted at the end of the stage for four tires, fuel and adjustments.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 101-200):

- Almirola started 17th and finished 16th.
- The No. 10 Ford driver pitted on lap 153 for four tires, fuel and adjustments to correct loose-handling conditions.
- Almirola was 16th when green-flag pit stops cycled through.
- He successfully raced to stay on the lead lap for the remainder of the stage.
- Almirola brought the Smithfield Ford to the pits at the conclusion of Stage 2 for four fresh tires, fuel, and air pressure and chassis adjustments.

Stage 3 Recap (Laps 201-300):

- Almirola started 13th and finished 13th.
- The No. 10 team advanced to its highest position of 11th on lap 212.
- Almirola pitted under green on lap 255 for four fresh tires, fuel and more adjustments. He was scored 15th after green-flag pit stop cycled through.
- He pitted again under caution on lap 272 for four tires, fuel and adjustments. The team found a puncture in the right-rear tire.
- Almirola raced in and around the top-15 before the end of the stage. He pitted for four tires, fuel and adjustments following Stage 3.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 301-400):

- Almirola started 15th and finished 16th.
- Almirola said the No. 10 car was extremely tight after the recent adjustments and needed better turn in the corners to make passes.
- The Smithfield Ford driver passed teammate Kevin Harvick for 13th on lap 247.
- Almirola pitted during the seventh caution of the race with 50 laps to go for four tires, fuel and adjustments to correct tight-handling conditions.
- He restarted 13th with 48 laps to go and raced to 11th before a caution on lap 398.
- Almirola brought the Smithfield Ford to the pits for two fresh tires and lined up 10th for the restart.
- On the final restart, Almirola was shuffled to the middle lane and lost positions before crossing the finish line in overtime.

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Notes:

- This was Almirola's third straight top-16 finish at Charlotte's oval. He finished 11th in last year's Coca-Cola 600.
- Brad Keselowski won the Coca-Cola 600 to score his 31st career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his first of the season and his second on the oval at Charlotte. His margin of victory over second-place Jimmie Johnson was .293 of a second.
- This was Ford's 690th all-time NASCAR Cup Series victory.
- This was Ford's 31st NASCAR Cup Series victory at Charlotte's oval, the most among all manufacturers. The last Ford driver to win the Coca-Cola 600 was Mark Martin in 2002. Ford's first Coca-Cola 600 victory came in 1962 via Nelson Stacy.
- There were eight caution periods for a total of 52 laps.
- Only 20 of the 40 drivers in the Coca-Cola 600 finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after the Coca-Cola 600 with a 22-point advantage over second-place Joey Logano.

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

“From the start of the day to the end of the day it was just a tough day. I was loose on the qualifying lap and spun, but was able to keep car from having much damage. We started in the rear and, on the pace laps, debris came out of the No. 11 car and damaged some of the splitter, so we had to make some repairs there later on. We battled both ends of the balance with the car all four stages and started to ease our way to the top-10 at the end before that final caution came out – then the restart didn't go my way. The Coke 600 is such a long race and so much can happen. I'm proud we battled back up there, but didn't get the finish we wanted. Luckily, we'll be back here in a few days and see if we can get the Smithfield Ford Mustang up front the second time around like we did in Darlington.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Alsco Uniforms 500k on Wednesday, May 27 at Charlotte Motor Speedway. The race starts at 8 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FS1 and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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