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NASCAR
CUP SERIES

ARIC ALMIROLA

Consistency Continues Ahead of Michigan Doubleheader

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (Aug. 4, 2020) – Aric Almirola, driver of the No. 10 Smithfield Hometown Original Heroes Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR), will race for his 10th and 11th consecutive top-10 finishes during this weekend’s NASCAR Cup Series doubleheader at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn.

“The consistency from this team is incredible,” Almirola said. “If we continue to run up front like this, we’re bound to put ourselves in position to win. It would be great to make the gap even larger between us and the playoff cutoff line, but a win is what we’re after in Michigan.”

The last time Almirola raced a doubleheader weekend June 27 and 28 at Pocono (Pa.) Raceway, he posted solid finishes of third and fifth, respectively.

“Racing doubleheader weekends is obviously tough on the race team because they have to bring a setup they believe will perform twice, but these weekends are also tough on the driver’s physical and mental abilities,” he said. “Typically, we have an entire week to recover before getting back in the car, and now we only have the night to sleep it off. If you finish well, you feel confident about the next day, but if you didn’t have the day you wanted, you have to let it go and come back the next day ready to improve. I’m hoping my physical preparation will pay off again this weekend in Michigan.”

Almirola is on a string of nine consecutive top-10 finishes, and it is the longest top-10 streak of his career. He finished fifth June 14 at Homestead-Miami Speedway, third June 22 at Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway, third June 27 at Pocono (Pa.) Raceway, fifth June 28 at Pocono, third July 5 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, eighth July 12 at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta, 10th July 19 at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, sixth July 23 at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City and seventh last Sunday at New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon.

In Almirola’s 15 previous starts at the 2-mile Michigan oval, he has one top-10 and three laps led. He has two starts in the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series at Michigan, winning in June 2010 after leading seven laps for his second win in the series that season. Additionally, the Tampa native made three Michigan starts in the NASCAR Xfinity Series with a best finish of eighth in June 2015 while piloting the No. 98 DenBeste Water Solutions Ford.

The No. 10 Ford driver sits eighth in the driver standings for his career-best points position after 20 races. In his first two seasons at SHR in 2018 and 2019, Almirola was ninth and 11th in the standings, respectively, after 20 races.

Almirola has career totals of two wins, two poles, 23 top-five finishes, 73 top-10s and 792 laps led in 336 starts. He has led a total of 255 laps this year at seven different venues.

Almirola continues to provide fans with content from his documentary series Beyond the 10, where they can get VIP, behind-the-scenes access by subscribing to his YouTube channel. Episodes showcase never-before-seen footage of the Smithfield driver 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.

Almirola and his longtime partner Smithfield Foods have collaborated to honor frontline hometown heroes by showcasing a special paint scheme on the No. 10 Ford this weekend. Smithfield looks to honor those who are putting their own health and safety at risk in a selfless act to protect and nourish others around them. The Smithfield “Hometown Original Heroes” program provides the opportunity for fans to share the stories of their own “Hometown Hero.” Be it a nurse, doctor, food worker, public servant or anyone who is on the frontlines each and every day, Smithfield and Almirola want to hear their stories and give.

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To nominate a hometown hero, visit www.SmithfieldHometownHeroes.com and submit a one-minute video nominating the “Hometown Hero.” Ten heroes will be chosen to have their stories told and will have their names riding onboard the No. 10 Smithfield Ford Mustang at a race during the NASCAR playoffs this fall. The heroes will also receive a VIP race day experience and full-year supply of Smithfield “Hometown Original” bacon.

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

Do you feel confident heading to Michigan?

“Michigan is a weird place for me because, in my mind, I feel like I run well there. I won a Truck race there years ago and, from that point forward, I just always loved going to Michigan. My wife’s family is from Michigan, so I go to Michigan with such a great attitude. I felt like in our first race there last year we had a lot of speed. I felt we had a top-five car there at Michigan and didn’t execute and things didn’t go our way with the restarts and I didn’t get the result. I’m excited about going back. Going to Michigan, there’s always a lot of pride for the manufacturers. I’d love to go there and keep the trophy in Ford’s backyard.”

How crazy are the restarts at Michigan, and are they the best times to take advantage of someone?

“We’re seeing restarts get crazier and crazier at tracks that we go to. There’s no one track that they’re crazier at than the other anymore because that is the most opportune time to pass cars, besides on pit road. Pit road is the easiest place to pass but, once you line up for the restart, there’s opportunity to gain three, four, five spots in a lap, and there’s no other opportunity to do something like that throughout the run. I feel like restarts are definitely the time to gain or lose track position, so you have to be on offense and defense at the same time. Michigan is very wide and you want to be aggressive and go take spots away, but you can easily give up four or five spots that are really hard to get back once we get single file.”

Some tracks are very line-sensitive on restarts. Is Michigan one of them?

“Yes, Michigan is very line-sensitive on restarts. The outside lane is usually the dominant lane. The inside lane – the cars on the inside usually lose sideforce, they lose the air on the side of their car and they are very loose down there in turns one and two on the restart. The outside lane usually has the momentum and is the preferred lane going through (turns) one and two on the restarts.”

ARIC ALMIROLA’S MICHIGAN PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2019	6/10	FireKeepers Casino 400	3	17	Running, 200/200	0	N/A
	8/11	Consumers Energy 400	12	33	Running, 193/200	0	N/A
2018	8/12	Consumers Energy 400	11	7	Running, 200/200	0	N/A
	6/10	*FireKeepers Casino 400	6	11	Running, 133/133	0	N/A
2017	8/13	◇Pure Michigan 400	24	12	Running, 202/202	0	N/A
2016	6/12	FireKeepers Casino 400	30	26	Running, 200/200	0	N/A
	8/28	Pure Michigan 400	26	25	Running, 198/200	0	N/A
2015	6/14	*Quicken Loans 400	26	22	Running, 137/138	0	\$123,346
	8/16	Pure Michigan 400	30	14	Running, 200/200	3	\$126,501
2014	6/15	Quicken Loans 400	4	31	Running, 197/200	0	\$121,201
	8/17	Pure Michigan 400	23	20	Running, 199/200	0	\$125,076
2013	6/16	Quicken Loans 400	5	17	Running, 200/200	0	\$124,221
	8/18	Pure Michigan 400	14	18	Running, 200/200	0	\$123,621
2012	6/17	Quicken Loans 400	15	17	Running, 199/200	0	\$119,621
	8/19	×Pure Michigan 400	41	20	Running, 201/201	0	\$124,746

* 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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