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Almirola Finishes Ninth at Darlington Playoff Opener *Go Bowling Ford Driver 12th in Playoff Point Standings*

Date: Sept. 6, 2020
Event: Cook Out Southern 500 (Round 27 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Darlington (S.C.) Raceway (1.366-mile oval)
Format: 367 laps, broken into three stages (115 laps/115 laps/137 laps)
Start/Finish: 10th/9th (Running, completed 367 of 367 laps)
Point Standing: 12th with 2,033 points (0 points ahead of top-12 cutoff)

Race Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Martin Truex Jr., of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)
Stage 2 Winner: Martin Truex Jr., of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-115):

- Aric Almirola started 10th and finished 18th.
- The Go Bowling Ford driver raced up to seventh early in the stage.
- He fell back when he began to note loose-handling conditions.
- Almirola pitted on lap 82 under caution for four tires, fuel, adjustments and light damage repair due contact with the No. 2 car.
- He brought the Go Bowling Ford to the pits at the end of the stage for four tires, fuel and more adjustments.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 116-230):

- Almirola started 20th and finished 11th.
- Almirola raced the Go Bowling Ford back to the top-15 on lap 151.
- He pitted under green on lap 171 for four fresh tires, fuel and adjustments.
- He came off pit road 18th before another caution was called on lap 180.
- Almirola raced just outside the top-10 before the stage concluded.
- He brought the No. 10 Ford to the pits at the end of the stage for four fresh tires, fuel and air pressure adjustments.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 231-367):

- Almirola started 12th and finished ninth.
- Almirola pit under caution on lap 247 for four tires and fuel and advanced back to the top-10.
- The Go Bowling Ford driver was scored ninth by lap 284.
- He pitted under green-flag conditions on lap 288 for four tires and fuel. He was scored fifth when pit stops cycled through.
- Almirola pitted on lap 321 under caution for four tires and fuel to restart seventh.
- Almirola chose the bottom lane on the restart and raced inside the top-10 for the remainder of the race.

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

“It wasn’t pretty, but we kept fighting all night. We didn’t get the stage points we would have wanted, but we fought hard to salvage a top-10 finish from the day. It’s great to see Kevin (Harvick) bring a win home for the organization, so congrats to him. I’ve got my eyes set on Richmond now.”

Notes:

- Almirola earned his 15th top-10 of the season and his second top-10 in 11 career NASCAR Cup Series starts at Darlington.
- Since joining SHR in 2018, Almirola only has one finish outside the top-15 at Darlington.
- This was Almirola’s second straight top-10 at Darlington. He finished seventh in the series’ previous visit to the track on May 20.
- Kevin Harvick’s margin of victory over second-place Austin Dillon was .343 of a second.
- This was SHR’s 28th NASCAR Cup Series victory with Ford. The team won its first race with Ford when former driver Kurt Busch captured the 2017 Daytona 500.
- There were seven caution periods for a total of 34 laps.
- Twenty of the 39 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.

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Playoff Standings (with two races to go before Round of 12):

1. Kevin Harvick (2,106 points) 1 win
2. Denny Hamlin (2,087 points) +54 points
3. Joey Logano (2,060 points) +27 points
4. Brad Keselowski (2,055 points) +22 points
5. Alex Bowman (2,052 points) +19 points
6. Martin Truex Jr. (2,049 points) +16 points
7. Chase Elliott (2,045 points) +12 points
8. Austin Dillon (2,043 points) +10 points
9. William Byron (2,042 points) +9 points
10. Kyle Busch (2,040 points) +7 points
11. Kurt Busch (2,037 points) +4 points
- 12. Aric Almirola (2,033 points) +0 points**
13. Clint Bowyer (2,033 points) -0 points
14. Cole Custer (2,030 points) -3 points
15. Matt DiBenedetto (2,016 points) -17 points
16. Ryan Blaney (2,016 points) -17 points

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Federated Auto Parts 400 on Saturday, Sept. 12 at Richmond (Va.) Raceway. It is the second race in the 10-race NASCAR Playoffs starts and it starts at 7:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBCSN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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