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Smithfield
**POWER
BITES**



Almirola 37th at Talladega

Smithfield Power Bites Ford Driver Leads Three Times Before Stage 1 Accident Ends Day

Date: Oct. 4, 2020
Event: YellaWood 500 (Round 31 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway (2.66-mile oval)
Format: 188 laps, broken into three stages (60 laps/60 laps/68 laps)
Start/Finish: 11th/37th (Accident, completed 57 of 200 laps)
Point Standing: 12th with 3,026 points, 48 points below top-eight cutoff
Note: Race extended 12 laps past its scheduled 188-lap distance due to a green-white-checked finish.

Race Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)
Stage 1 Winner: Chris Buescher of Roush-Fenway Racing (Ford)
Stage 2 Winner: Martin Truex, Jr. of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-60):

- Aric Almirola started 11th and finished 11th.
- The No. 10 Smithfield Power Bites Ford driver pitted on lap 27 during the competition caution for fuel only.
- He came off pit road as the race leader.
- Almirola raced in and around the top-10 and regained the lead on lap 55.
- He aggressively held the lead by blocking both the high and low lanes until the No. 88 car raced to his outside and caused Almirola's car to turn into the outside wall.
- Almirola drove to the pit box to assess damage. Unfortunately, his Ford Mustang was damaged beyond repair, ending his day.

Notes:

- Almirola led three times for nine laps to increase his laps-led total at Talladega to 55.
- Denny Hamlin won the YellaWood 500 to score his 44th career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his seventh of the season and his second at Talladega. His margin of victory over second-place Erik Jones was .086 of a second.
- There were 13 caution periods for a total of 54 laps.
- Twenty-two of the 39 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Hamlin leaves Talladega as the championship leader with a 20-point advantage over second-place Kevin Harvick.

Playoff Standings (with one race to go before Round of 8):

1. Denny Hamlin (3,141 points) 1 win
2. Kurt Busch (3,048 points) 1 win
3. Kevin Harvick (3,121 points) +68 points
4. Brad Keselowski (3,094 points) +41 points
5. Martin Truex, Jr. (3,085 points) +32 points
6. Chase Elliott (3,080 points) +27 points
7. Alex Bowman (3,075 points) +22 points
8. Joey Logano (3,074 points) +21 points
9. Austin Dillon (3,053 points) -21 points
10. Kyle Busch (3,053 points) -21 points
11. Clint Bowyer (3,036 points) -37 points
12. **Aric Almirola (3,026 points) -48 points**

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

“We had such a fast Smithfield Power Bites Ford Mustang. I’m just disappointed. We were doing everything we needed to do. We were closing in to the end of Stage 1 and it looked like we were going to score a lot of points there, which is exactly what we needed to do. It looks like he (Alex Bowman) got to my outside and my car started to turn to the right, so it’s unfortunate. I don’t know if he got in the back of me and hooked me or how that played out, but my car just made a hard right into the fence. It’s unfortunate. I had a lot of confidence going into today. I thought we were going to have a good shot to win. Our car was so fast, but unfortunately the Good Lord had different plans for us today. We’ll go onto the Roval and try one more time.”

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Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Bank of America Roval 400 on Sunday, Oct. 11 at the Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway road course. It is the sixth race of the 10-race playoffs and the final race in the Round of 12. It starts at 2:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBC and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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