



ARIC ALMIROLA

Birthday: March 14, 1984

Hometown: Tampa, Fla.

Current Residence: Mooresville, N.C.



Career Highlights:

- Won the Coke Zero 400 July 6, 2014, his first in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, on the 30 year anniversary of Richard Petty's 200th win in the same race. The win was the first for the No. 43 since 1999.
- Finished 18th in the No. 43 Ford in 2013, his second full NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season. Earned one top-five finish and six top-10 results, including four consecutive top-10 finishes.
- Completed first full NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season in No. 43 Ford in 2012. Won first Cup Series pole at Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway. Earned one top-five finish and four top-10 results. Finished 20th in standings.
- Finished fourth in the 2011 NASCAR Nationwide Series driver point standings in his first full-time season in the series. Collected one pole, 18 top-10 and seven top-five finishes.
- Won two races and finished in the runner-up spot in his first full-time season in the 2010 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series. Earned 21 top-10 and 11 top-five finishes.
- Cup Series career-best finish of fourth place in the No. 9 Ford in Homestead in 2010.
- Made first NASCAR Cup Series start at Las Vegas Motor Speedway in 2007.
- Was an original member of the Joe Gibbs Racing/Reggie White Driver Diversity Program
- Rookie of the year in the Florida Modified Division and the Southern Automobile Racing Association in 2000.

Aric Almirola's entrance into the motorsports world began in 1992 at the age of eight. Racing go-karts, Almirola earned championships at both the local and state levels before advancing to national competition in 1998. That year he earned the pole for the World Karting Association's prestigious Grand National event in Daytona, Fla., before finishing the year fourth in the national point standings.

Almirola joined the ranks of open wheel modifieds in 2000 and earned Rookie of the Year honors in the Florida Modified division and the Southern Automobile Racing Association. Almirola made his way to the Florida Sunbelt Series and took Rookie of the Year honors there as well before winning a series-high six poles the following year.

Due to his results in the grassroots levels, in 2003 Almirola was tapped to be one of the original members of the Joe Gibbs Racing/Reggie White Driver Diversity Program. He made his first foray into NASCAR competition in 2004 behind the wheel of a late model stock car at Ace Speedway in Altamahaw, N.C. Almirola collected two victories, six top-five and 15 top-10 finishes that year.

Almirola continued his winning ways driving late models again the next season. He won seven races and earned 11 pole positions that year. Those impressive statistics caught the eye of the owners of Morgan-Dollar Motorsports, who chose him to pilot the team's NASCAR Camping

World Truck Series ride in four races. Almirola finished inside the top-10 twice.

Almirola moved to the NASCAR Nationwide Series in 2006 and earned his first career Nationwide Series pole at The Milwaukee Mile. The Tampa, Fla., native remained in the Nationwide Series in 2007 and was credited with his first win at The Milwaukee Mile qualifying and starting a car entered for Denny Hamlin, who flew in from a Sprint Cup Series event and replaced him midway through the event. That shared victory helped open doors to NASCAR's premiere series when Dale Earnhardt, Inc. inked Almirola to a part-time Cup Series deal in 2008. Almirola drove sporadically in the Cup Series and Nationwide Series the following two years.

In 2010, Almirola found himself racing full time in the truck series for Billy Ballew Motorsports, earning two wins and finishing second in the championship point standings. In addition, Almirola piloted a Nationwide car for JR Motorsports in seven events before signing on to race full-time with the team in 2011. Almirola drove to seven top-five and 18 top-10 efforts in addition to one pole position en route to a fourth-place finish in the standings with JR Motorsports.

Joining Richard Petty Motorsports in January 2012 to drive the legendary No. 43 Ford, Almirola made his way back to the Sprint Cup Series and earned his first full-season opportunity. Almirola wasted little time being successful, earning his first Cup Series pole for the prestigious Coca-Cola 600 at the Charlotte Motor Speedway in May. He finished the season with four top-10 finishes and one top-five. He returned to the No. 43 in 2013 and finished 18th in points after compiling one top-five and six top-10 finishes.

Almirola started the 2014 season off strong but luck was not on his side. The No. 43 Ford was caught up in three crashes in the first half of the season. That did not slow Almirola down. He head to his home track Daytona International Speedway for the iconic Fourth of July event. Showing speed early on, he fought off Kurt Busch and Brian Vickers to come away with a win, his first in the Sprint Cup Series. The win was the first for the No. 43 in 15 years and came on the 30th anniversary of Richard Petty's 200th win, which he scored in the same race in 1984. The win will likely earn Almirola and team a spot in the Chase for the Sprint Cup.