

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

Saturday, November 1, 2025

An Interview with:

Aric Almirola

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by the driver of the No. 19 and the 2025 Owner Champion, that's Aric Almirola.

We'll take questions.

Q. I remember in Vegas you said this would be the biggest accomplishment of your career. You done it. How does it feel?

ARIC ALMIROLA: It feels amazing. I'm a little bit emotionally drained at the moment. Just such an awesome moment for me to be able to do that for Coach and Joe Gibbs Racing.

Tonight is not about Aric Almirola. I just happened to be the guy driving the racing car.

This will go down in history as Joe Gibbs Racing 2025 Xfinity Owner's Championship, not Aric Almirola. I am so grateful to be a part of that and to deliver that to Joe Gibbs Racing. Just the way this year went, right, the way it turned out, having Young Life on the car. Obviously that ministry meaning a lot to the Gibbs family, to J.D. Gibbs, to have J.D.'s name on the car. We had Coy's name on the car tonight. It was just special.

Yeah, I'm so grateful. This is an amazing opportunity for me to be able to say thank you to Coach and the Gibbs family for what they've done for me and my life. At 19 years old, I was debating on whether or not I was going to continue to keep racing. I was spending a lot of my family's money. The alternative was to get my engineering degree. If I didn't get my engineering degree, the alternative was to work at my grandfather's body shop, working 60 hours a week, eating Bondo dust, right?

J.D. gave me an opportunity as a 19-year-old kid to become a professional race car driver, to get a paycheck to drive a race car.

I'm just so grateful that I got that opportunity and that 22 years later I was able to win a championship for Joe Gibbs Racing. Not for me, but for Joe Gibbs Racing.

It's just really special.



Q. Did you and Coach get to have a talk after the race?

ARIC ALMIROLA: We did. It's really cool. He called me two years ago when I was walking away from Cup racing. He said, Hey, I think I got something you might be interested in. Be fun for both of us. I'd like for you to come back to Joe Gibbs Racing and finish your career here. It would mean a lot to me and our family.

Yeah, so what better way to say thank you than to deliver, right? Last year I left here sad. I came up one spot short to Allgaier to do that. Had no idea when I left here that this year was even on the radar. This all came together three weeks before Daytona.

I wasn't even still supposed to race at the end of the season, right? I won Bristol. It was like, Oh, boy, we might have a shot at this. Leading into Vegas, we sat down and talked. It was like, Hey, we need to seriously consider going to race for the Owner's Championship. I think we can do it. We went to Vegas. We won. Obviously put us in position to come here and have a chance to race for it again.

Justin Bonsignore was so gracious to give up Martinsville and the race here so that I could drive the 19 car. Just really grateful to Justin for doing that.

To answer your question, yeah, Coach and I shared a moment. I shared a moment with Melissa, J.D.'s wife, and Miller is here, Jason is here, J.D.'s boys. So yeah, it was just really special. Ty came to Victory Lane. I talked to Heather Gibbs on the phone, on Coach's phone.

Yeah, it's special. It means a lot to me to be able to do that for the Gibbs family and for Joe Gibbs Racing. Coach talks all the time about winning with people. You win with people. So tonight was just that, right? It was about honoring the people at Joe Gibbs Racing that made this happen. I was lucky enough to be a part of it.

Q. You said this is your career highlight. Could this be a mic drop sort of moment for you?

ARIC ALMIROLA: Potentially, yeah (smiling). I left here last year not knowing what to expect. I'm leaving here again not knowing what to expect.



I've learned over the last few years, probably the last four years -- don't forget I announced I was going to retire and didn't retire. Mark Martin did it, too. Jimmie Johnson, too, so...

I don't know. I've learned to just let God lead and I'll follow. I tried for so much of my life and of my career to white knuckle it, steer the ship. It's been really fun for me the last couple years to just let God steer the ship. I'm just along for the ride.

Q. You drove for great teams. You have firsthand insight how a successful team has to be run. You mentioned the word 'retirement'. In the future, is it an option to become a team owner by yourself?

ARIC ALMIROLA: No, I need a couple more commas in my bank account.

No, that is out. I don't even want to own a go-kart team. Ask Alex. I'll buy him all the bats and cleats he wants.

Yeah, I have no desire to be a team owner. The saying is if you want to make a small fortune in racing, start with a big one.

You find the sponsor, we'll do it. You put up half (smiling).

Q. Talking about family and emphasizing that with Joe Gibbs, how does it feel to have your kids with you onstage?

ARIC ALMIROLA: It's amazing. Never gets old, celebrating with my family.

Every dad wants their kids to look up to them like a superhero, right? It's pretty easy when they're three, four, five. It gets really hard when they're this age. They're a lot smarter, know everything. They have their own friend group. Dad becomes not very cool.

In moments like these, dad is still cool, right? I love it. It is awesome to be able to share these moments with my family 'cause this is what it's all about for me.

I stepped away from full-time racing because I was fearful that I was making way, way too many sacrifices with my family to focus on chasing my dreams and my career. I wanted my kids to know that they're more important to me than trophies or my career or chasing more money or any of those things. That's why I decided to walk away.

To have the opportunity to do both is incredible.

Q. When you stopped racing Cup, was there a thought this is a chance for me to revive the way someone may look at me, because the success you've had in the Xfinity Series, winning races, people maybe look at you as a better race car driver than what you looked like when you retired from Cup?

ARIC ALMIROLA: Yeah, God knew exactly what He was doing. If He would have allowed me to have this kind of success early on in my career, I probably would have been a lot different person. I would have had a lot more pride and ego, probably had a lot bigger head, thought way more highly of myself.

God kept me very humble throughout my entire career. I was a journeyman racer. I won here and there, performed at a high level here and there, but not at the level that I wanted to, right? I wanted to win multiple races a year, win championships. I wanted to do all those things.

In life, you don't always get what you want. Sometimes unanswered prayers are the best prayers. For me, I'm able to look back on my life and my career now and be grateful that I'm right where God wants me.

Yeah, I wanted to be in the best equipment. I wanted to win races. I believed in my heart that I could. I just never had the right opportunity, was never surrounded with just the right people and the right place in the right time. It's so much about timing. That didn't happen for me.

I am totally at peace with that. I've been blessed beyond my wildest imagination. I've achieved way more than I ever thought I would achieve. When I was racing late models and go-karts in Florida, all over the Southeast, I never thought I'd be a NASCAR driver. I had hopes but never thought I would actually become that.

There's thousands of kids that race all over the country that want to be a professional race car driver. Only 40 are going to roll off tomorrow and be a NASCAR Cup driver. Only 40. The odds are not really in your favor to be a NASCAR Cup driver, let alone the best, right?

There's only so many Jimmie Johnsons and Jeff Gordons. There's only so many Dale Earnhardts and Kyle Larsons, Richard Pettys. I was not one of those. I am totally fine with that. I'm Aric Almirola, and I'm exactly who God wants me to be.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations to you and the entire 19 team.

ARIC ALMIROLA: Thank you guys. It's been awesome.



