

**Richard Petty Motorsports**  
**NASCAR XFINITY Series Daytona 300 Race Report**  
Daytona International Speedway

**Daytona 300 Results:****1: Chase Elliott****11: Aric Almirola, No. 98 Fresh From Florida Ford****25: Jeb Burton, No. 43 J. Streicher Ford**

Saturday's NASCAR XFINITY Series race marked the start to the 2016 season for one of NASCAR's premier series. Both Aric Almirola and Jeb Burton experienced the woes of superspeedway racing. Despite losing the draft early in the race, both teams worked hard to return to the main pack. Almirola worked his No. 98 Fresh From Florida Ford from a lap down to an 11th-place finish. Damage to the No. 43 J. Streicher Ford hindered Burton from a lead lap finish. He completed his first XFINITY race of the season in the 25th spot.

**Aric Almirola, No. 98 Fresh From Florida Ford**

Aric Almirola piloted the No. 98 Fresh From Florida Ford Mustang for Biagi DenBeste from the 24th starting spot, in the outside lane. The competitors had intense racing action right from the start, immediately going three wide until the first caution on Lap 5. Almirola pitted for fuel only and returned to the race track in the 28th position. Once the field restarted on Lap 10, it didn't take long for another caution on Lap 13 for an accident a few cars ahead of Almirola, but great maneuvering kept the No. 43 out of trouble. Almirola stayed out as the rest of the field went to pit road and restarted the race in the second position.

A caution on Lap 21, allowed Almirola to bring his car down pit road for four tires and fuel. With a fairly clean race so far, Almirola backed off the gas to run at the back of the lead pack but lost the draft and fell to 32nd. For the next 20 laps, Almirola led the third pack of cars on track. The field strung out and Almirola went one lap down. He held the 22nd spot after a pit stop on Lap 68 for four tires.

Now the fight was on for Almirola to get the Lucky Dog. Almirola ran alongside of the leaders and worked his way to the Lucky Dog spot. He held the spot when the caution flag flew on Lap 100. Almirola pit for four tires, fuel and a trackbar adjustment to ready himself for one last restart. Taking the green flag on Lap 103, Almirola was in 14th. He worked with Spotter Stevie Reeves to find a line to get him to the front of the field, but a hole never opened up to make a significant move. When the checkered flag fell after 300 miles, Almirola brought the No. 98 Fresh From Florida Ford Mustang home 11th.

"I made a big mistake early in the race thinking that they were going to wreck, and I decided to ride at the back of the pack," said Almirola. "I lost the draft, so then I had to race incredibly aggressive to try and get back on the lead lap, which we were able to do. I was thinking we were going to mix it up on that last restart, but everybody committed to the bottom two lanes and the top lane just kept getting shuffled out. It was really hard to do anything and make

any moves, but, all in all, it was an OK day for us. These guys work really hard, and I would have loved to have gotten them a better finish."

### **Jeb Burton, No. 43 J. Streicher Ford**

The troubles started early for Jeb Burton in today's NASCAR XFINITY Series season opener at Daytona International Speedway. Burton started 21st after qualifying this morning but caught trouble early as cars checked up in front of him on Lap 12 and he braked, getting hit from behind and sending the No. 43 J. Streicher Ford through the grass on the backstretch.

The team came to pit, seeing minimal damage from the spinout. Applying tape to the hood and cleaning the grille, the team filled the car up with gas and changed four tires to get Burton back out, one lap down from the leaders. Talking with Crew Chief Drew Blickensderfer, Burton was assured that the car would still have speed and would be fine.

Burton spent the rest of the race fighting his way back to the leaders. Battling a tight racecar in the corners with a small vibration, he was unable to stay on the lead lap and get the speed needed to get a Top-15 finish. In his first NASCAR XFINITY Series race with Richard Petty Motorsports, and his first race in the series since 2014, Burton finished 25th and two laps down. The team will look forward to racing the second race of the XFINITY Series season in Atlanta next Saturday, February 27.

"It's frustrating, but it could have been worse," Burton said. "We could have finished thirtysomething, so at least we got some points and we can go on to Atlanta and start getting better and better every week. I know this team is capable of a lot better than 25th, so we just have to keep digging and go to Atlanta. We just have to buckle down and gain as many points as we can, so we can lock ourselves into that Chase and then everything will get back to even and we can go and try to win a championship."

### **About Richard Petty Motorsports**

A performance and marketing driven company, Richard Petty Motorsports, co-owned by NASCAR Hall of Famer Richard Petty and successful business entrepreneur Andrew Murstein, is one of the most recognized brands in all of motorsports. With a history of over 200 wins and business partnerships with national and global leaders, today the race operation fields two teams in competition in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series with drivers Aric Almirola and Brian Scott. Almirola will return to the iconic No. 43 Ford with partners Smithfield Foods, STP, United States Air Force and the "Fresh From Florida" campaign. Scott will make his debut with the team and drive the Petty Family No. 44 Ford. Albertsons Companies, Shore Lodge, Twisted Tea and GoBowling.com will join Scott as he competes for Rookie of the Year in his first full-time season in the Sprint Cup Series. Richard Petty Motorsports will also field the No. 43 Ford Mustang in the NASCAR XFINITY Series with driver Jeb Burton, who will compete for Rookie of the Year in his first full-time season in the No. 43 J. Streicher Ford. The team is headquartered in Mooresville, N.C.

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