

MPE Motorsports Report:

2nd NHRA Carolinas Nationals
zMAX Dragway
Concord, N.C., Sept. 18-20, 2009

Clay Millican
Drummonds, Tenn.
Hope4Sudan/Motorvation Top Fuel Dragster
Contact: Joe Sherk, jlsherk@aol.com/360.981.4806

Millican ‘going for it’ as NHRA Countdown to Championship begins

The final six NHRA Full Throttle Drag Racing Series races come with a very special meaning for Clay Millican – he’s a bona-fide first-time contender for the Top Fuel championship. Only nine other drivers have the same bragging rights.

Thanks to the Countdown to the Championship format, the difference between Millican – the 10th seed – and No. 1 Antron Brown is only 110 points, far less than the 700-plus that separated them prior to the U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis two weeks ago.

“The playoff system gives the 10 drivers a chance to start over and that is where we are,” said Millican, driver of the Hope4Sudan/Motorvation dragster. “Actually, we are trying something we worked on earlier in the year. We know we are dealing with the same issues – getting the car to run quicker earlier in the run – and we continue to work on improving those early numbers.

“I’m ready to roll into zMAX Dragway for our first go at the Countdown. We might as well start the weekend off right and move out of 10th place.”

Millican didn’t secure his playoff berth until the final Indy qualifying run when Joe Hartley, who was just three points behind him, did not qualify.

“We’re coming in after making another round of (mechanical) changes and looking at it like we are starting a brand-new season . . . which we are. We are going to go for it. We have no reason not to.

“We don’t know what the weather is going to give us, but we are 110 points behind Antron and we might as well start knocking a dent in all of them. In one weekend’s time you could make up a whole bunch of those points. The goal is to go rounds – and take care of it one round at a time.”

Other drivers in the final Countdown are Tony Schumacher, Larry Dixon, Brandon Bernstein, Cory McClenathan, Spencer Massey, Morgan Lucas, Shawn Langdon and Doug Kalitta.

“I think everybody will be going for it,” predicted Millican. “It will be a different kind of weekend than normal. There are going to be some offensive guys and some defensive guys. We’re just going to be offensive.

“We have a game plan for it . . . we just hope it works.”

The Countdown competition is going to be fast and furious because the first four races are back-to-back. The contenders move to Dallas, Sept. 25-27; Memphis, Oct. 2-4; and Richmond, Va., Oct. 11; before going west for the crucial final two events at Las Vegas, Nov. 1; and Pomona, Calif., Nov. 15.

###

Millican to attend BRAKES fund-raiser

Millican will attend Top Fuel driver Doug Herbert’s fund-raising dinner for BRAKES Thursday night in Charlotte.

“I’m looking forward to the BRAKES benefit,” Millican said. “They are going to debut the public service announcement Doug and I did. BRAKES stands for Be Responsible and Keep Everyone Safe. We have the opportunity to talk about BRAKES and trying to keep kids safe.”

Herbert founded the nonprofit organization – which strives to save lives through raising awareness of young drivers by conducting defensive driving programs and rewarding young drivers that have safe driving records – last year after his two sons tragically died in an automobile accident.

###

Schedule:

Pro Qualifying – **Friday:** 2:30 and 6 p.m.; **Saturday,** 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Final Eliminations: **Sunday,** 11 a.m.

Television: ESPN2 and ESPN2 HD, all times ET

Saturday, two hours of qualifying coverage, 11:30 p.m. (ET) **Sunday,** 11:30 a.m., NHRA Race Day; three hours of eliminations coverage, 7 p.m.