

MPE Motorsports Report:

24th annual O'Reilly Super Start Batteries NHRA Fall Nationals
Texas Motorplex
Ennis, Texas, Sept. 25-27, 2009
Round 2 of 6-race Countdown to 1

Clay Millican
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Clay Millican optimistic going into Fall Nationals at Dallas

If Sunday's opening round of NHRA's Countdown to 1 championship showdown set the template for what's to come, expect the unexpected when the O'Reilly Super Start Batteries Fall Nationals begins its three-day run Friday at venerable Texas Motorplex in Ennis.

The Full Throttle Drag Racing Series underdogs had the upper hand in the first round of eliminations Sunday at Charlotte. Six of the top 10 were ousted early, including Clay Millican. The popular driver from Drummonds, Tenn., sits in 10th place, but moving higher in the standings is only a few round wins away.

"This championship race certainly isn't over," he said. "We have five races left and there's no reason why we can't make a run at it. Everyone on our Hope4Sudan/Motorvation team believes we are capable of winning races and now's the time for us to take that next step."

It's no secret Millican's ride needs a little extra boost leaving the starting line. "We need to run quicker in the first 330 feet; that's our problem area," continued Millican. "The car looks and feels like it is willing and Lance (Larsen, crew chief) has made a whole bunch of changes. But, like I've said before – the car sometimes seems like it has a mind of its own. And that's frustrated all of us. Maybe we need to try some Full Throttle in the fuel tank."

"Cory McClenathan (the No. 9 qualifier) was able to take advantage of an opportunity and won at Charlotte," added Millican. "He moved right up into the points lead by while Antron (Brown, No. 1 going into the Countdown) lost in the first round. We'd like to get on a hot streak at Dallas like Cory did and begin our move up the standings."

This is the second of four consecutive Countdown events. Stops at Memphis – Millican's hometown track – (Oct. 2-4) and Richmond, Va. (Oct. 9-11) – follow before a two-week break. The final two races are in Las Vegas (Oct. 30-Nov. 1) and Pomona, Calif. (Nov. 12-15).

Race schedule:

Pro qualifying – Friday, 2 and 4:45 p.m.; Saturday, 11:15 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Eliminations – Sunday, 11 a.m.

Television schedule: ESPN and ESPNHD, all times ET

Sunday: two hours of qualifying, 12:15 a.m.; *NHRA Race Day*, 11 a.m.; three hours of eliminations, 7 p.m.