

## **MPE Motorsports Report:**

O'Reilly NHRA Summer Nationals  
Heartland Park Topeka, Kan.  
May, 29-31, 2009

Clay Millican  
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### **Clay Millican seeking personal history at Heartland Park Topeka**

It's been 16 years since Chuck Etchells and Jim Epler etched their names into the NHRA history books by establishing two of Funny Car's premier milestones at Heartland Park Topeka – Etchells for the first four-second elapsed time (4.987-seconds) and Epler for his exhilarating first to exceed 300 mph (300.44)

“That race track has a lot of history,” recalled Clay Millican, who rewrote virtually all of IHRA's Top Fuel records before joining NHRA's Full Throttle Racing Series two years ago.

Now he'd like to add a high-water achievement of his own at the venerable facility. “It will be fun to see if we can get our first NHRA win there,” he said. The opportunity comes in the 21<sup>st</sup> O'Reilly Summer Nationals, Friday through Sunday.

That initial race victory will be a milestone the Hope4Sudan/Motorvation crew and his many fans will not forget. Getting there, however, won't be easy.

“We must concentrate on the Topeka race and have a good showing,” Millican said. “And then we'll see if we can go some rounds. I know we are capable of it; we just haven't done it. Now it is time.”

The urgency is necessary because Millican is 11<sup>th</sup> in points, 108 behind the 10<sup>th</sup> and final Countdown to the Championship position with 10 races to go in the regular season. “We are backed up against the wall,” he said. “It's time to do something to prove to ourselves – and everybody else – that we can win rounds and races. I know we are capable, and so does the team.

“It's literally a blink of an eye difference between winning and losing a lot of times, and right now we just happen to be on the wrong side of those things. I've been on the other side of it and the people here have, too. We have to be able to withstand this storm and get through it . . . and do our job. Then it will come back the other way.

“We've made good runs and not turned on the win light,” Millican continued. “We need to make better runs and make sure we do turn on that light. It's a matter of going a little

quicker here and there. We could've had a lot of round wins this year, but we've been on the wrong side of good runs. I think our car has certainly shown it is capable.

"The St. Louis race is a perfect example of how our whole year has been," Millican commented. "We ran 3.91 (seconds) in the first round and lost to a 3.90. That's been the case all year. The way I look at that stuff is that it goes in cycles. I don't believe in luck, but the cycle hasn't been in our favor so far this year. But that will turn around. It always does. You just have to withstand the pain of those first-round losses until it does go the other way."

Crew chief Lance Larsen and the crew "aren't sitting on our hands," said Millican. "The day we got home from Bristol we did a lot of clutch tests. Hopefully they will show some results. We think they will. We found a lot of little things while we've been looking to improve those early e.t. numbers. Now we must find the combination that makes the car quicker early (in the 1000-foot run) because it runs really well once it gets going.

"I'm really encouraged. I think the car will run well at Topeka. We're just going to work our tails off to make it happen."

This is the first of three straight races. Stops in Joliet, Ill. and Englishtown, N.J., follow.

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**Topeka qualifying schedule:**

Friday: 4 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.  
Eliminations, 11 a.m.

**Television schedule: ESPN2 and ESPN2 HD, all times EDT**

Saturday: qualifying coverage, two hours, 8 p.m.; Sunday: NHRA Today, 30-minute pre-race show, 11 a.m.; eliminations coverage, three hours, 4 p.m.

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