



NBA

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NASCAR's Air Titan track drying device debut

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NASCAR's Air Titan track drying system, which will debut this weekend, is the first phase in an ongoing process designed to ultimately shorten rain delays by 80 percent. (Douglas Jones-USA TODAY Sports)



Should a rain shower interrupt any of the season-opening events on track at Daytona International Speedway during Speedweeks, fans won't have to wait as long for racing to resume, as NASCAR formally announced today its Air Titan track-drying technology.

NASCAR's Air Titan track drying system, which will debut this weekend, is the first phase in an ongoing process designed to ultimately shorten rain delays by 80 percent. The initiative was set forth by NASCAR Chairman and CEO Brian France less than eight months ago when he asked the team at the NASCAR Research and Development Center in Concord, N.C., to develop technology that served this purpose.

The new system, created by the NASCAR R&D Center, will use compressed air to efficiently and reliably push water off the racing surface and onto the apron where vacuum trucks will remove the remaining moisture. Jet dryers will follow each Air Titan to dry excess water left on the racing surface, as well as any debris.

Fans can expect to see the new system in use during Daytona's Speedweeks, with the possibility of other track in the future.

"We're going to go back after Daytona, make some tweaks, see what we can do to learn from the process," said Steve O'Donnell, NASCAR's senior vice president of racing operations. "We'll look at options in the future, but Daytona will just be Phase 1.

"Keep in mind that this has never been tested during a race or during full rain conditions at a track, so we've still got some work to do once we see it, if we do see it in play, and we'll learn from there and make sure we've got the best model going forward possible for other tracks."

At Daytona, there will be two sets of identical equipment on opposite sides of the track moving in the same direction making one complete circuit of the race track. Compressors will feed air through a hose to the Air Titan modules, which the system will then be able to blow sheets of highly pressurized air over the race surface forcing water to the apron. The vacuum trucks, located on the apron, will absorb the runoff.

No race cars will be allowed on track during the track-drying process. However, cars are able to remain on track while jet dryers remove debris.

The Air Titan has been put through a scientific testing process in which NASCAR enlisted the expertise of the National Center for Asphalt Technology (NCAT) at Auburn; Racing Surface Technologies, ISC's track construction company; and QualPro, Inc. Additionally, Elgin Sweeper Company, Sullair and Ring Power CAT provided equipment during testing, and will be part of the track-drying process during Speedweeks.

Tomorrow morning at 10 a.m., the Air Titan will go through its last test before Speedweeks.



BOOGITY! BOOGITY! BOOGITY!

Mark your calendars now and get ready to "reach up and pull those belts down tight one more time!" The Daytona 500 on FOX is set for Feb. 24.