

## Santa Anita Surface Overhaul in Progress

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Work continues on the overhaul of Santa Anita's synthetic surface.

Photo: Tracy Gantz

Large piles of material dot Santa Anita's backside parking lot, as work continues on the overhaul of the track's synthetic surface. Repairs to the drainage system are expected to be finished soon, with the next step being the placement of the base grit layer, according to Ian Pearse, founder and president of Pro-Ride Racing Australia.

Pearse and Pro-Ride project manager Andrew McLachlan are on site overseeing the work, which is designed to be a more long-term solution to the problems that have plagued Santa Anita's original Cushion Track synthetic surface. Earlier this year, Pearse added Pro-Ride material, which enabled Santa Anita to finish its racing season.

"We are reconstituting the surface, adding more binders and a much better fiber," Pearse said Aug. 1.

Santa Anita closed its main track July 11. First, the synthetic material was removed to the parking lot. Then the Cushion Track asphalt base, which track officials claimed didn't drain properly, was completely torn out.

Instead of asphalt, Pearse is using drainage rock below the grit layer, with a membrane placed between the two to keep the rock layer in place.

"We expect to begin with the grit layer possibly by Aug. 7 or early the following week," Pearse said.

Work crews can then begin returning the reconstituted synthetic material to the track, which Pearse said is not a lengthy process.

The Oak Tree Racing Association meeting at Santa Anita begins Sept. 24. The Breeders' Cup World Championships will be run at the track Oct. 24-25 and will be the first Breeders' Cup run on a synthetic surface.

*(Editor's note: The operator of Santa Anita, the Los Angeles Turf Club, [in late May sued](#) Cushion Track USA and affiliates in California federal court over the installation and maintenance of the track. As of Aug. 1, none of the defendants have filed a formal response in court.)*