

Visit report 10/10/2016: Mercedes-Benz Superdome

By: Kai Hermann

The Mercedes-Benz Superdome is the home stadium of the New Orleans Saints football team, and is one of the few old stadiums which hasn't gone obsolete over the years (despite Katrina). Some major renovations have been performed over the years resulting in one of the best stadiums in the country, hosting up to 7 super bowls, most recently in 2013.



Figure 1: Mercedes-Benz Superdome Field

The tour started out on the field where we got an opportunity to play a few balls ourselves. The field is made of synthetic grass with a soil consisting out of 70% of sand and 30% rubber. The field gets replaced each year, hosting only 10 competition games, 2 off season games, 4 college games and a high school game. This replacement however provides a good opportunity to attend to the underlying infrastructure and electrical boxes. The Mercedes-Benz Superdome is sponsored by Mercedes-Benz who have a contract for just another year. Their contract has been going for almost 10 years and they sponsor about 10 to 12 million dollar annually.

The height of the Mercedes-Benz Superdome is 293 feet and it can facilitate 72.000 places. The newest addition to the stadium is the large videoboard above the poles. The seats in the stadium have multiple colour for a curious reason. The New Orleans Saints presented some poor results, causing the public attendance to decrease. To mimic the atmosphere of a full attendance the Mercedes-Benz Superdome they varied the seat colours so the attendance would look like a fully filled stadium.



Figure 2: Boilers of Mercedes-Benz Superdome

The stadium is built on a soil very comparable to a typically Dutch soil. Americans basically quantify this as a swamp, meaning it had to be founded on hundreds of pilings below the stadium. The stadium is also one of the few closed-roof stadiums in the United States. This is because of the hot climate during the Nation Football League season, urging the operators to create a cool climate.

The Mercedes-Benz Superdome played a major role during the flood of Hurricane Katrina. While the city was flooding quickly creating huge chaos, the Mercedes-Benz Superdome provided a safe haven for 10.000 refugees, as the stadium was used as a flood shelter. The stadium proved to be a convenient position as the rising water never reached the stadium. The storm however caused the roof to leak wetting the field greatly, making it unavailable for more refugees. Because of the storm the power shut down quickly, and 10.000 people had to depend on 2 tanks of diesel as backup energy. All the water supply broke down making the toilets unusable and creating an agonizing living environment. In total the refugees stayed 6 days in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome until they were evacuated.

Because of the poor performances of the New Orleans Saints the flood and simultaneous destruction of the Mercedes-Benz Superdome, provided them with a good opportunity to abandon the stadium. They however decided to stay and be a part of the new New Orleans which was created from the debris of Katrina.