

The Complete DAM Buying Checklist for Collegiate Sports Programs

Your Strategic Guide to Selecting the Right Digital Asset Management Platform

Introduction: Why Collegiate Sports Programs Need Purpose-Built DAM

The collegiate athletics industry operates differently than other verticals. Your digital asset management platform needs to handle:

- **Sport-specific** seasons and recruiting cycles with tight, non-negotiable deadlines
- **Athletic department** teams coordinating across communications, creative services, marketing, and compliance
- **Massive visual libraries** with thousands of assets across dozens of sports
- **Complex rights management** for photographer contracts, student-athlete NIL considerations, and media agreements
- **Multi-channel distribution** from official athletics sites to social to broadcast environments
- **Real-time collaboration** between creative teams, coaches, and conference/national governing bodies

This checklist will help you evaluate DAM platforms based on what actually matters for collegiate athletics operations—not generic enterprise features that don't address your specific challenges.

How to Use This Checklist

As you evaluate DAM vendors:

- **Check each requirement** that applies to your organization
- **Star critical must-haves** that are non-negotiable
- **Take notes** on how each vendor addresses your specific needs
- **Compare responses** across platforms using this standardized framework
- **Scoring Guide:**
 - **Essential (Must-Have):** Platform cannot be considered without this
 - **Important (Should-Have):** Strong preference, willing to compromise if other areas excel
 - **Nice-to-Have:** Differentiator between otherwise equal platforms

SECTION 1: Collegiate Sports–Specific Asset Management

Sport & Program Organization

- ☐ **Organize assets by sport season** and academic year (Fall 2025, Spring 2026, etc.)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Hierarchical categorization** (Institution → Sport → Event Type → Game/Date)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Link multiple assets to single event** (game action, sideline, pregame, postgame, feature content)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Uniform/branding variant management** across sports and special events

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Archive past seasons** while maintaining searchability

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Support for practice, scrimmage, and behind-the-scenes**

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Construction-Specific Metadata

- ☐ **Custom metadata fields for athletics-specific attributes:**

- Sport and team
- Student-athlete name and number
- Opponent and event name
- Game date and venue
- Score/outcome
- Season/academic year attribution
- Conference affiliation
- NIL/usage status

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Controlled vocabularies** for consistent naming (e.g., "Football" vs. "FB")

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Student-athlete information** tracking (name, eligibility status, NIL terms, usage rights)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Photographer/documentation credit management** (who took site photos, drone footage)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Feature and storytelling** content tagging for editorial and recruiting assets

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Visual Search & Discovery

- ☐ **Visual similarity search** (find similar game moments, athletes, or compositions)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Color-based search** and filtering (team colors, uniform variants)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Advanced filtering** by multiple attributes simultaneously (sport + event type + athlete + season)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Saved searches** for frequently used queries (e.g., "Football FW25 Game Action Approved")

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

SECTION 2: Workflow & Collaboration

Multi-Department Coordination

- ☐ **Role-based access control for different stakeholders:**

- Creative Services (upload/edit capabilities)
- Compliance (view/approve)
- Marketing (approved assets only)
- Ticket Sales (customer-facing materials)
- Coaching Staff (sport-specific assets)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Sport-level permissions** (give sport-specific staff access to relevant programs)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Asset approval workflows** with multi-level review (creative → communications → compliance)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Comments and annotation** tools directly on asset

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Version control** to track asset iterations (raw edit, final, platform-specific variants)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Season Launches & Deadlines

- ☐ **Project-based** asset organization (Season Opener, Bowl Game, Championship Run, Signing Day)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Scheduled publishing** for embargo releases (media, conference, fan-facing content)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Deadline tracking** and reminders for asset deliverables

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Task assignment** for editing, translation, and regional/conference adaptation

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Multi-Site & Distributed Team Support

- ☐ **Regional or conference-specific** asset variations (different messaging and branding by market)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Institutional brand consistency** tools (approved logos, fonts, color palettes accessible to all sports and departments)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

SECTION 3: Digital Channel Integration

Athletics Website & E-Commerce Integration

- ☐ **Integrations** with athletics and fan engagement platforms:
 - Sidearm Sports
 - CBS Sports / IMG
 - Learfield / Paciolan**Priority:** ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Multiple image** variants per asset (thumbnail, hero, gallery, editorial)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Automated image** resizing for different digital channels
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Synchronization** with roster and event databases
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Social Media & Content Marketing

- ☐ **Direct publishing** to social platforms or integration with social management tools
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Student-athlete and NIL** partner content management
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

CMS & Marketing Automation

- ☐ **Content management** system integration (WordPress, Contentful, etc.)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Roster and stats** platform (Product Information Management equivalent) integration
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

SECTION 4: Rights Management & Legal Compliance

Photographer & Creative Contracts

- ☐ **Contract attachment to assets** (photographer agreements, student-athlete image releases)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Usage rights tracking** (editorial only, commercial, conference restrictions, time limits)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Expiration date** alerts for time-limited usage rights
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Automatic watermarking** for non-approved or restricted assets
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Brand & Compliance Protection

- ☐ **Unauthorized** use prevention (secure access, download tracking)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Embargo management** for pre-announcement content (signing day, coaching hires, uniform reveals)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Asset download auditing** (who downloaded what, when)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

SECTION 5: Technical Requirements

File Format & Quality Support

- ☐ **RAW file support** (CR2, NEF, ARW, etc.) for original photography
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **High-resolution image handling** (100MB+ drone photography, site documentation)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Video format support** (MP4, MOV, ProRes for broadcast and highlight footage)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Design file support** (PSD, AI, INDD for campaign and recruiting materials)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **3D/AR file storage** (GLB, USDZ for virtual venue and fan experience content)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Performance & Scale

- ☐ **Storage capacity** for your asset volume
 - Current needs: _____ TB
 - 3-year projection: _____ TB**Priority:** ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Upload speed** for large batch imports (daily site photos, drone surveys, scan data)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Search performance** with hundreds of thousands of assets across multiple active projects
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Concurrent user support** (how many team members can work simultaneously across field and office?)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Security & Compliance

- ☐ **Encryption** (in transit and at rest)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **SOC 2 compliance**
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **GDPR** compliance for international operations
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Two-factor authentication**
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Single sign-on (SSO) support**
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Regular security audits and penetration testing**
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Backup & Disaster Recovery

- ☐ **Automated backup** schedule and retention
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Geographic redundancy** (multiple data center locations)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Disaster recovery SLA** (recovery time objective/recovery point objective)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Asset versioning and recovery** (restore previous drawing revisions)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

SECTION 6: User Experience & Adoption

Interface & Usability

- ☐ **Intuitive interface** that field users and non-technical users can navigate
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Mobile access** (responsive web or native app)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Bulk operations** (upload, tag, download, approve multiple documents at once)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Drag-and-drop functionality** for uploads and organization
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Customizable dashboards** by role/user
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Asset Sharing & Distribution

- ☐ **Shareable links with expiration dates**
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Password protection** for sensitive shares
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Branded portals** for external stakeholders (media, conference offices, sponsors)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Lightbox/collection** creation for assembling asset packages
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Download format options** (original, optimized, specific dimensions)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Training & Support

- ☐ **Onboarding program** for implementation
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
 - ☐ **User training** (live sessions, recorded tutorials, documentation)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
 - ☐ **Customer support hours** and response time SLA
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
 - ☐ **Dedicated account manager** or customer success contact
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
 - ☐ **Regular platform updates** and feature releases
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
-

SECTION 7: Analytics & Reporting

Usage & Activity Tracking

- ☐ **Timeline** (asset download reports)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **User activity reports** (who's accessing what, when)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Asset lifecycle tracking** (from upload to archive)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

SECTION 8: Cost & Business Model

Pricing Structure

☐ **Transparent pricing** (no hidden fees)

- Base platform cost: _____
- Per-user fees: _____
- Storage costs: _____

☐ **Scalability of pricing** as your needs grow

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

☐ **Contract flexibility** (annual vs. multi-year, exit terms)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Implementation & Migration

☐ **Implementation timeline** (how long to go live?)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

☐ **Migration support** from existing systems

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

☐ **Data migration tools** (automated vs. manual)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

☐ **Metadata preservation** during migration

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Total Cost of Ownership

☐ **Initial setup costs**

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

☐ **Ongoing maintenance** requirements and costs

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

☐ **Additional fees** (overage charges, add-on features)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

☐ **Internal resource requirements** (IT support needed?)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

SECTION 9: Vendor Evaluation

References & Case Studies

☐ **Collegiate athletics references** in similar size/market

Requested references: _____

☐ **Case studies** demonstrating collegiate sports industry success
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

☐ **Peer reviews** and industry recognition
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Decision Matrix

Use this framework to score and compare vendors:

Sport-Specific Features	%			
Workflow & Collaboration	%			
Digital Channel Integration	%			
Rights Management	%			
Technical Requirements	%			
User Experience	%			
Analytics & Reporting	%			
Cost & Value	%			
Vendor Stability	%			
TOTAL WEIGHTED SCORE	100%			

Next Steps

After completing this checklist:

1. **Schedule** demos with your top 3 vendors
 2. **Request** live walkthroughs of government and public sector-specific features
 3. **Talk to** reference customers in the collegiate sports
 4. **Negotiate** trial period to test with your actual workflows
 5. **Involve** key stakeholders from creative services, communications, marketing, compliance, and IT
 6. **Calculate** total cost of ownership over 3-5 years
 7. **Review contracts** carefully (exit terms, data ownership, SLAs)
-

About NetX

NetX provides enterprise digital asset management solutions trusted by leading collegiate athletics programs nationwide. Our platform is built to handle the unique demands of collegiate sports: seasonal cycles, multi-sport departments, massive visual libraries, complex rights and compliance management, and seamless digital channel integration.

Ready to see NetX in action? Schedule a personalized demo focused on your specific athletics workflows and challenges.

This checklist is provided as a strategic resource for collegiate athletics programs evaluating DAM platforms. For more information about how NetX addresses these requirements, contact our team.