

The Complete DAM Buying Checklist for Professional Sports Organizations

Your Strategic Guide to Selecting the
Right Digital Asset Management Platform



Introduction

Why Professional Sports Organizations Need Purpose-Built DAM

Professional sports organizations operate differently than other verticals. Your digital asset management platform needs to handle:

- **Season, playoff, and event cycles** with real-time, non-negotiable content deadlines
- **Organization-wide teams** coordinating across communications, marketing, social, broadcast, sponsorship, and merchandising
- **Massive visual libraries** with thousands of assets spanning game action, player portraits, behind-the-scenes, sponsor content, and archive footage
- **Complex rights management** for league licensing agreements, player image rights, broadcast restrictions, and sponsor content guidelines
- **Multi-channel distribution** from official team websites and apps to broadcast partners, sponsors, media, and fan engagement platforms
- **Real-time collaboration** between creative, communications, coaching staff, agents, league offices, and broadcast and sponsor partners

This checklist will help you evaluate DAM platforms based on what actually matters for professional sports 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 institution
- **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

Professional Sports-Specific Asset Management

Season & Event Organization

- ☐ **Organize assets by season, competition, and event** (2025–26 Season, Playoffs 2026, All-Star Weekend, etc.)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Hierarchical categorization** (Organization → Season → Event/Game → Content Type)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Link multiple assets to a single game or event** (action photography, player portraits, locker room content, highlight footage, sponsor activations)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Messaging and branding variant management** across seasons, campaigns, and sponsor activations
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Archive past seasons, playoff runs, and historic content** while maintaining full searchability
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Support** for practice documentation, pre-game content, and behind-the-scenes locker room imagery
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Professional Sports-Specific Metadata

- ☐ **Custom metadata fields** for sports-specific attributes:
 - Player name, number, and position
 - Game date, opponent, and venue
 - Season, competition round, and event type
 - Content type (action, portrait, sponsor, fan, archive)
 - League and team affiliation
 - Photographer and broadcast credit
 - Player image rights and NIL status
 - Sponsor association and activation name
- Priority:* ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

- ☐ **Controlled vocabularies** for consistent naming (e.g., “Regular Season” vs. “Season Game”)

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

- ☐ **Player image rights and NIL tracking** (player name, rights status, usage terms, contract expiration)

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

- ☐ **Photographer and imaging credit management**

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

- ☐ **Sponsor content and activation tagging** for partner-facing and co-branded assets

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

Visual Search & Discovery

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

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

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

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

- ☐ **Advanced filtering** by multiple attributes simultaneously (player + game + content type + rights status)

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

- ☐ **Saved searches** for frequently used queries (e.g., “Player Portrait 2026 Season Rights Cleared”)

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

Section 2

Workflow & Collaboration

Multi-Department Coordination

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

- Creative and content (upload/edit capabilities)
- Communications and PR (approved assets only)
- Sponsorship and partnerships (sponsor-cleared assets)
- Broadcast and media (broadcast-rights cleared content)
- Merchandising and licensing (product and brand assets)

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

☐ **Team and league-level permissions** (control access by department, partner, and league office)

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

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

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

☐ **Comments and annotation tools** directly on assets

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

☐ **Version control** to track asset iterations (raw edit, retouched, broadcast crop, social format variants)

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

Game Day & Event Deadlines

☐ **Project-based asset organization** (Game Day, Draft Night, Training Camp, Championship Run, Sponsor Activation)

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

☐ **Real-time or near real-time asset ingestion and publishing** for game day content

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

☐ **Scheduled publishing** for embargo releases (pre-game, halftime, post-game content windows)

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

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

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

- ☐ **Task assignment** retouching, captioning, and channel-specific formatting

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

Multi-Market & Partner Team Support

- ☐ **Multi-language interface** for international players, partners, and global fan audiences

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

- ☐ **Market or territory-specific asset variations** (different content cleared for different broadcast regions)

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

- ☐ **Brand consistency tools** (approved logos, fonts, color palettes, and uniform graphics accessible to all partners)

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

Section 3

Digital Channel Integration

Website, App & Fan Engagement Platform Integration

- ☐ **Integrations with sports and fan engagement platforms:**
 - Sportradar / Stats Perform
 - Deltatre / IBM Sports
 - Ticketmaster / AXS
 - League office content platforms
 - Custom platforms via API

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Multiple image variants per game or event** (thumbnail, hero, gallery, social, broadcast, print)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Automated image resizing and optimization** for different digital and broadcast channels

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Synchronization** with player databases, roster management, and statistics platforms

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
- ☐ **Athlete, ambassador, and partner content management**

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

CMS & Digital Humanities Integration

- ☐ **Content management system integration** (WordPress, Adobe Experience Manager, etc.)

Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Broadcast and media partner platform integration**

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

Section 4

Rights Management & Legal Compliance

Player, Photographer & Broadcast Contracts

- ☐ **Contract attachment** to assets (player image rights agreements, NIL contracts, photographer agreements, broadcast licensing)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Usage rights tracking** (internal only, media, broadcast territory, sponsor use, merchandise, time limits)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Expiration date alerts** for player contracts, NIL agreements, and time-limited usage rights
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Automatic watermarking** for non-approved, rights-restricted, or embargo assets
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Brand & League Compliance Protection

- ☐ **Unauthorized use prevention** (secure access, download tracking)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **League licensing and compliance enforcement** (ensure assets meet league guidelines before distribution)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Broadcast territory restriction enforcement** (content cleared for one market not accessible to others)
- ☐ **Embargo management** for pre-game, pre-announcement, and pre-trade content
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Asset download auditing** (who downloaded what, when)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **External portal** for controlled sharing with media, sponsors, broadcast partners, and league offices
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Section 5

Technical Requirements

File Format & Quality Support

- ☐ **RAW file support** (CR2, NEF, ARW, etc.) for original game and event photography
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **High-resolution image handling** (100MB+ files)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Video format support** (MP4, MOV, ProRes, MXF for broadcast, highlight, and social footage)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Design file support** (PSD, AI, INDD for sponsor, merchandise, and print materials)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **3D/AR file storage** (GLB, USDZ for virtual fan experiences and immersive sponsor activations)
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 (post-game shoot ingestion and broadcast footage)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Search performance** with hundreds of thousands of game and archive assets
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Concurrent user support** (how many team members and partners can work simultaneously on game day?)
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 players, partners, and fan audiences
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Two-factor authentication**
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Single sign-on (SSO) support** – including integration with institutional identity providers
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 versions)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have

Section 6

User Experience & Adoption

Interface & Usability

- ☐ **Intuitive interface** that non-technical communications and marketing staff can navigate

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

- ☐ **Mobile access** (responsive web or native app) for on-site game day and travel use

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

- ☐ **Bulk operations** (upload, tag, download, approve multiple assets 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 or embargoed shares

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

- ☐ **Branded portals** for external partners (media, sponsors, broadcast partners, and league offices)

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

- ☐ **Lightbox/collection creation** for assembling game, player, and sponsor asset packages

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

- ☐ **Download format options** (original, broadcast-optimized, social-specific, print 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

Statistics System

- ☐ **Asset download and reproduction request reports** by game, season, partner, and sponsor activation
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **User activity reports** (who's accessing what, when)
Priority: ☐ Essential ☐ Important ☐ Nice-to-Have
- ☐ **Asset lifecycle tracking** (from game day shoot through 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 season, roster, and partner network 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

☐ **Professional sports organization** at similar collection size and operational scope

▪ Requested references: _____

☐ **Case studies** demonstrating professional sports sector success

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

☐ **Peer reviews** and industry recognition

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

Decision Matrix

Category	Weight (%)	Vendor A (1-10)	Vendor B (1-10)	Vendor C (1-10)
Sports-Specific Features	%			
Workflow & Collaboration	%			
Digital Channel Integration	%			
Rights Management & NIL	%			
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 professional sports-specific features including game day workflows
3. **Talk to reference customers** in the professional sports sector
4. **Negotiate a trial period** to test with your actual game day and season workflows
5. **Involve key stakeholders** from creative, communications, sponsorship, broadcast, legal, 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 professional sports organizations worldwide. Our platform is built to handle the unique demands of sports operations: season and game day cycles, multi-department and partner teams, expansive visual and broadcast libraries, complex player image rights and league compliance management, and seamless fan engagement and sponsor platform integration.

Ready to see NetX in action?

Ready to see NetX in action? Schedule a personalized demo focused on your organization's specific game day workflows and challenges.

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