

# The Denver Broncos Put Data Availability in the Playbook with Veeam



"Reliability is where the rubber meets the road. When our team is on the clock to make a draft pick or any big decision, every second counts. Veeam is a reliable data availability solution. It eases our anxiety."

— Russ Trainor  
Vice President of Information Technology  
Denver Broncos Football Club

## The Business Challenge

American football is big business, and the Denver Broncos are big players in a big market. The team, which Forbes.com valued at \$2.4 billion in 2016, is a member of the National Football League (NFL), which reigns supreme among sports leagues worldwide. Howmuch.net reported the NFL generated \$13 billion in revenue in 2015, followed by Major League Baseball (\$9.5 billion) and the Premier League (\$5.3 billion).

The Denver Broncos are one of the most successful teams in the NFL. They choose exceptional players, hire brilliant coaches and use IT to gain a competitive edge on and off the field. The Denver Broncos were one of the first teams to digitize their playbook, giving coaches a fast, easy way to communicate new plays and video to staff and players. They also build proprietary applications and databases for scouting, training and game-day video analysis along with other Football centric applications.

"You can never have too much information at your fingertips, especially when the clock is ticking and decisions have to be made fast," said Russ Trainor, Vice President of Information Technology for the Denver Broncos Football Club. "The clock seems to tick loudest during the NFL draft, training camp and on game days. That's when access to data is most critical."

The NFL draft is a three-day media extravaganza. Over the course of seven rounds, teams select eligible players for the upcoming season. They have 10 minutes to make a selection in round one, seven minutes in round two, and only two minutes in remaining rounds.

"Our guys at the draft venue are in constant contact with the folks back home who've spent weeks analyzing each eligible player and compiling invaluable statistical data," Trainor said. "If that data isn't available every minute leading up to the draft and during the draft, we can't make the best-possible selections. Choosing the right players can make or break a team."

Trainor said data availability is just as critical during training camp, the weeks leading up to Game Day and of course on Game Day. Without access to data during training camp, coaches have a difficult time whittling down a 90-player roster to 53. Without access to data on game day, digitized playbooks are useless and fan-facing systems become obsolete. Ticket scanners won't work at entrance gates to the stadium, point-of-sale systems are useless at concession stands, videos won't play on scoreboards, and Wi-Fi can't power fans' mobile apps.

"If data isn't available, we're in a bad situation," Trainor said. "That's why we had to replace legacy backup. It was unreliable and made us susceptible to downtime, which is unacceptable, and data loss, which is unthinkable."

## Industry

Entertainment

## Company



The Denver Broncos, who will embark on their 58th season in 2017, are tied for the most World Championship appearances in professional football history. In addition to being back-to-back World Champions following the 1997-98 seasons, the Broncos captured their third World Championship in 2015. The team has also totaled 29 all-time winning seasons, 22 playoff berths, 15 Division titles and 10 Conference Championship Game appearances. "Broncos Country" is home to the NFL's best fans with the franchise's 47-year home game sellout streak representing the longest in professional football. The 2017 season will mark Pat Bowlen's 34th as owner of the Broncos. The first owner in professional football history to reach 300 wins in his first 30 years, Mr. Bowlen has helped the Broncos to the highest regular-season winning percentage (.612 / 322-204-1) in the NFL during his distinguished ownership.

## The Veeam Solution

The Denver Broncos replaced legacy backup with Veeam® Availability Suite™. Veeam delivers 24.7.365 Availability of data so the team can make fast, well-informed decisions on and off the field.

"When the clock is ticking during the draft, at training camp and on game days, we know Veeam has our back," Trainor said. "Our data is available 24.7.365 because Veeam backup and recovery are fast and reliable."

Trainor said reliability is the number one benefit of using Veeam.

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Trainor said Veeam benefits the team in additional ways.

"Veeam is scalable, so even though our data grows by 30 percent each year,

Veeam scales with us," he said. "Veeam also integrates fully with VMware and NetApp. They work as one unit, so restoring virtual machines from NetApp storage snapshots is simple and straightforward with Veeam—no special training is required. The Veeam interface is intuitive and easy to use."

Trainor said Veeam supported the team in three initiatives that legacy backup couldn't handle: the final leg of digital transformation to virtualization, backup to the cloud and industry audits.

The Denver Broncos virtualized every football application except one because they worried legacy backup wouldn't be able to recover it. Because Veeam backs up and recovers reliably, they were able to virtualize the application and complete their digital transformation project. Veeam also provides an integrated, fast and secure way for the team to back up, replicate and restore from public or private clouds. To enhance disaster recovery (DR) procedures, the Broncos can point their backups and replicas to the cloud of their choice using their Veeam console. And, Veeam provides detailed reports on the team's backup infrastructure, which helps the Broncos demonstrate compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) for fans' credit card purchases and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for players' medical records.

"When you consider all Veeam offers and you factor in cost—Veeam is affordable—switching to Veeam was a no-brainer," Trainor said. "Now I understand why a friend of mine said sarcastically 'You're not using Veeam?' It makes perfect sense."

## The Results

- Ensures 24.7.365 Availability of data for fast decision making during the NFL Draft**  
 "IT is a competitive advantage for any team, but only if data is available 24.7.365," Trainor said. "No one has time for old-school backup. No one has time to recover data manually. Veeam backs up and recovers our data quickly and reliably, making it available 24.7.365."
- Provides enterprise scalability to protect petabytes of data**  
 "Enterprise scalability was one of our criteria when we decided to replace legacy backup," Trainor said. "We chose Veeam because it scales as our data grows."
- Supports final leg of digital transformation to virtualization**  
 "The only way we could virtualize a critical football application was knowing backup and recovery would be reliable," Trainor said. "That's what sets Veeam apart—reliability."

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## Challenge

The Denver Broncos compile and analyze enormous amounts of data to gain a competitive edge on and off the field. Data helps them select new players during the NFL draft, assemble their roster at training camp and beat their opponents on game day. When slow backup and recovery threatened data availability and jeopardized their ability to make well-informed decisions quickly, the Denver Broncos sacked legacy backup.

## Solution

Veeam Availability Suite

The Denver Broncos replaced legacy backup with Veeam. Veeam delivers 24.7.365 Availability of data so the team can make decisions quickly on and off the field.

The Broncos use Veeam to back up 100 VMware vSphere virtual machines to NetApp FAS storage systems in their stadium and practice facility. The team will be using Veeam to transfer backup copies to the cloud for DR in the very near future.

## Results

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- Provides enterprise scalability to protect petabytes of data
- Supports final leg of digital transformation to virtualization

## About Veeam Software

Veeam® has pioneered a new market of *Availability for the Always-On Enterprise™* to help companies solve the challenges of keeping their businesses up and running at all times. Veeam enables the Always-On Business™ with solutions that provide recovery time and point objectives (RTPO™) of less than 15 minutes for virtualized applications and data.