



📍 CASE STUDY

Game-Day Decisions at Scale: How the NCAA Modernizes Weather Operations

Scaling weather intelligence across nearly 180 NCAA championship events to support safer, more consistent game-day decisions.

ABOUT THE NCAA

The National Collegiate Athletic Association is the governing body for collegiate athletics in the United States, supporting more than 1,100 member institutions and overseeing nearly 180 championship events each year. The organization operates at the intersection of higher education and competitive sports. The NCAA is responsible for delivering high-profile, multi-site events while prioritizing student-athlete safety, fairness, and a consistent championship experience across diverse venues.

The NCAA's Assistant Director of Championships and Alliances, Ryan Richardson, helps lead event operations, including weather-related decisions that impact athlete safety and event continuity.

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The Challenge

How do you manage weather risk across nearly 180 championship events nationwide?

For the NCAA, managing weather during championship events means coordinating information across multiple venues, stakeholders, and levels of expertise — often in real time.

According to Richardson, access to weather information was one of the organization's biggest challenges before partnering with DTN.

“We were told 152 meteorologists and 18 of those had a high-class worldwide certification. That was significantly more than other options that we were looking into.”

With events taking place across multiple sites, a broad group of decision-makers needed timely access to weather data, adding another layer of complexity.

The NCAA also needed a solution that could support championship managers with varying levels of weather experience.

“We have 30 to 40 championship managers on staff with varying levels of experience dealing with the weather,” Richardson said. “So we needed a solution that was easy to understand and, most importantly, visually clear for all of those involved.”

Why DTN

A Partnership Built on Expertise and Innovation

As the NCAA evaluated providers, expertise, and long-term partnership were top priorities. According to Richardson, DTN stood apart from other options because of the depth of its meteorological team, industry experience, and forward-looking approach to the partnership.

“We were told 152 meteorologists and 18 of those had a high-class worldwide certification,” he said. “That was significantly more than other options that we were looking into.”

That level of expertise, combined with DTN's experience supporting outdoor sports and event management, gave the NCAA confidence it was partnering with an established industry leader.

“Not only the expertise, but they're an industry leader in outdoor sport and event management along with agriculture,” Richardson said.

“If I'm running multiple sites for an event and DTN can see exactly what I'm seeing, and we can share that information, it limits the risk and different interpretations of the data.”

Reliability and customer service also played a key role, particularly for an organization focused on serving student-athletes and member institutions nationwide.

But what ultimately stood out most to Richardson was DTN's vision for the future and the continued evolution of Weather Hub as part of the NCAA's latest five-year partnership renewal.

"DTN came in with, 'Hey, we've had a great partnership, but let's build on it and let's make it better. Here's where we're going with Weather Hub,'" he said. "That's what really stood out to me the most."

Future State and Weather Hub Value

Driving alignment across championship events

As the NCAA looks ahead, the focus is on improving consistency and coordination across championship events as operations continue to scale nationwide.

A key priority is simplifying access to weather information across a broad group of users while creating a more unified approach to weather decision-making.

"Weather Hub is appealing because it gives us a level of autonomy we haven't had before in terms of providing access to our users," Richardson said. "That helps us, but it also helps DTN, because getting everyone set up was a heavy lift."

With expanded access management, role-specific dashboards and a more centralized view of weather conditions, the platform is designed to help stakeholders work from the same real-time information and respond more confidently as conditions change.

Clarity in how weather data is presented is equally important, particularly given the range of experience across championship managers.

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Looking ahead, shared visibility across sites is expected to improve alignment further and reduce risk.

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That level of coordination becomes especially critical during large-scale events like March Madness, where multiple venues and tight schedules leave little room for inconsistent decision-making.

As Weather Hub continues to evolve, the NCAA sees an opportunity to create a more connected, centralized approach to weather decision-making — helping championship teams coordinate more effectively and respond with greater confidence during high-stakes events.