America’s most popular sports league and one of the country’s best run businesses chooses Lenovo hardware for:

- Smart design and top of the line features
- Reliability, portability and durability
- Breadth of product portfolio
- Look and feel of ThinkPad Precision Keyboard
- Touch screen performance
INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1920, the NFL developed the model for the successful modern sports league, including extensive revenue sharing, competitive excellence, strong franchises and national distribution. The NFL is the industry leader on a wide range of fronts. In fact, Business Week magazine calls the NFL “one of America’s best-run businesses.”

The NFL relies on technology to seamlessly run many aspects of its business – both at games and at the League office. In 2007, the NFL turned to Lenovo, the world’s largest PC maker, to help serve the needs of its various departments with the company’s innovative products, including workstations, desktops and the iconic ThinkPad laptop PCs. As a natural extension of that relationship, Lenovo entered into a marketing partnership with the NFL in 2012, becoming the official computer provider for the league.

“As the CIO of the NFL, it's my responsibility to make sure we're deploying hardware that can be used in the environments our employees are working in.”

MICHELLE MCKENNA-DOYLE
CIO
NFL

CUSTOMER PROFILE

As America’s most popular sports league, the National Football League (NFL) is comprised of 32 franchises across the country. The teams compete throughout the four-week preseason, seventeen-week regular season and, for twelve teams, a single-elimination playoff that culminates with the Super Bowl – the world’s biggest annual sporting event.

The NFL governs and promotes the game of football and also successfully manages marketing sponsorships, and broadcasting and licensing deals. The organization relies on technology and reliable hardware solutions to operate many facets of its business – from ensuring players’ health and safety to analyzing game footage to carrying out day-to-day duties at the league’s headquarters in New York City.

CHALLENGES & REQUIREMENTS

The NFL’s IT and operations department is responsible for managing technology needs across the organization. The league requires a number of hardware solutions to keep the organization operating efficiently. Essential among the league’s priorities was to find a PC partner with a broad range of products to suit the various uses.

“We consider a number of factors when purchasing the right hardware for the NFL,” said Aaron Amendolia, IT director, NFL. “We want attractive products with a smart design and top-of-the-line features, but we also value reliability, durability and portability since we’re such a mobile company.” In regard to design, the NFL IT and operations staff sought a hardware partner that offered the following capabilities:

- A rugged, durable build to stand up to wear and tear
- A mobile, light weight form factor for ultimate portability and remote work conditions
- Advanced multimedia functionality and processing power for video replay and editing
- Touchscreen capabilities for enhanced collaboration
SITUATION

In 2012, the NFL and Lenovo agreed to an exclusive multi-year deal making Lenovo the official PC provider and sponsor of the league. Even before that time, the NFL's IT and operations department had worked closely with Lenovo to implement a number of best-in-class hardware solutions for use throughout the league. The versatile Lenovo products are being used for a wide variety of job functions, including in the NFL's Injury Review System, in the NFL's Officiating Command Center, at the Super Bowl's "NFL Experience," and at NFL Films where commercials and other broadcast assets are produced.

NFL INJURY VIDEO REVIEW SYSTEM

ThinkStation C30 Workstation

The NFL's number one priority is player health and safety, and the Lenovo ThinkStation C30 Workstation is an integral part of the NFL’s Injury Video Review System. During every game, NFL staff receive an HD feed from the broadcast truck that is digitally recorded on the Lenovo ThinkStation C30 workstation and used as a replay system during the game so that a team’s athletic trainer and/or physicians can review the video of an injury to see the mechanism of injury. After every game, the staff provides team athletic trainers and game officials with the recorded broadcast so they’re able to review the game.

The HD feed is duplicated to 10 thumb drives after each game, so it’s important that the workstation has several expansion slots to plug in expansion cards. A small form factor computer would not suffice for the NFL’s Injury Review System, but the ThinkStation C30 workstation’s multiple video and USB slots meet the league’s needs perfectly.

In addition, the ThinkStation C30 workstation’s high-performance Intel® Xeon® processor is highly valuable for Injury Review System use. The multi core processing efficiency can easily decode large amounts of HD video without lag, making the process smooth and seamless.

“It’s critical that we have the right technology in place to help us share information that impacts decisions about our players’ health and safety," said John Cave, VP of IT, NFL. "All 31 NFL stadiums use the Lenovo ThinkStation C30 workstation for our Injury Video Review System. The dual-processor workstation is highly reliable and delivers top notch performance while being efficient on space.”

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- JOHN CAVE
Vice President - IT
NFL
NFL OFFICIATING COMMAND CENTER
ThinkCentre M92
At the NFL's officiating command center in New York, staff is responsible for following each football game live and evaluating the game officials during every game play. The officiating command center staff relies on 17 ThinkCentre M92 desktops to receive and play back highly compressed HD video of every game in real time. The ThinkCentre M92's second generation Intel® Core™ i7 processor delivers the fast, reliable performance that enables the staff to decode the footage on the graphics processing unit with ease.

THE NFL EXPERIENCE
ThinkCentre M92z All-in-One
At previous Super Bowls, the NFL hosted the "NFL Experience," an interactive event where fans had the opportunity to utilize the same research tools game officials use for analyzing game footage. While at the NFL Experience, fans could use the ThinkCentre M92z desktop to easily search for any game play from the entire season from a database of broadcast footage. The space-saving form factor, large screen and HD graphics featured on the all-in-one desktop are ideal for use at the NFL Experience.

Additionally, the built-in touchscreen capabilities are ideal for this task since they allow fans to telestrate using their fingers on the full HD screen, giving them a sportscaster experience. The intuitive multi-touch screen is also easy to navigate and control, and the staff has found that fans rarely need assistance navigating the ThinkCentre M92z.

NFL FILMS
ThinkPad T430s and ThinkCentre M92z All-in-One
Based in New Jersey, NFL Films is an NFL-owned company responsible for producing commercials, television programs, films and documentaries for the league. As part of the NFL’s recent move to become a more mobile company, NFL Films was looking for a product that allowed employees to efficiently work from home and other remote events. NFL Films found Lenovo’s ThinkPad product line to provide the ultimate combination of portability and durability while also offering the best in security.

"Lenovo’s dedication to research and development keeps us ahead of the curve," said Cave. "The combined speed and performance of the ThinkPad line is always improving, so we’ve been able to continue to upgrade within the family of products over the years without needing to look elsewhere."

NFL Films first deployed ThinkPad T410s nearly five years ago and has since upgraded to the T430s to assist in behind-the-scenes operations in the control room, including creating rundowns for all of the shows in the computer newsroom, running prompted scripts for the on-stage promoters and additional internet research and e-mail communication.

"The T430s is a reliable work horse that rarely fails," added Bob Gaskill, IT support manager, NFL. "At less than 4 lbs. and with up to 13 hours of battery life, it really is the ultimate mobile solution for our employees."

NFL Films employees also rely on the trusted hard drive of the ThinkCentre M92z all-in-one desktop for typical office tasks and producing programs in the green room. The IT staff conducts a product refresh every three years and will soon be upgrading to the ThinkCentre M93z. Combined, NFL Films currently has close to 400 Lenovo products in its New Jersey offices.
NFL HEADQUARTERS
ThinkPad T430s and ThinkCentre M92z All-in-One

NFL employees rely on the Lenovo ThinkPad T430s and ThinkCentre M92z to carry out day-to-day activities at the league’s headquarters in New York City. In addition to needing a reliable PC for use in the office, it’s important that headquarter employees have a lightweight, mobile product that can be used no matter where they’re working from that particular day. With 32 franchises across the country, employees are often working from any number of locations or events – from the NFL draft to Monday Night Football. The Lenovo ThinkPad T430s gives employees the same functionality while on the road as they have in the office.

“As the CIO of the NFL, it’s my responsibility to make sure we’re deploying hardware that can be used in the environments our employees are working in,” said Michelle McKenna-Doyle, CIO, NFL. “We’re not a standard ‘put your PC on your desk and leave it there’ type of organization. We’re constantly shipping our technology equipment all over the place for use at games and remote events. Hot, cold, indoors, outdoors – you name it, and we need a product that will work for us in that setting. Lenovo’s breadth of high quality, reliable products provides us with the ability to find the right solution for all of the league’s operations, no matter what the task.”

The NFL headquarters is also outfitted with a number of ThinkCentre M92z All-in-Ones. Its touch screen capabilities offer employees enhanced interaction, and the intuitive, tile-based display is easy to control and useful for filling out injury waivers.

The NFL has recently placed an order as part of our hardware refresh for 195 of the new luxury model T440s Ultrabook™ which will include touch capability, a sleeker body and lighter build as well as the new Haswell processor. Our standard option will include an i5 processor, 8 Gb Ram and a 128 Gb solid state drive. We are also purchasing for our developers an upgraded model to the standard T440s which will include touch capability, i7 processor, 12 Gb Ram and 256 Gb solid state drive. Included in the order will be 115 of the new line of M93z All in one’s and 50 of the new M93p “Tiny”, both of these will include the new Haswell chips. The 50 M93p’s will be used as rack mount systems to upgrade the Central Machine Room (CMR) at NFL Network.

AT THE GAME
ThinkPad® X1 Carbon Ultrabook™

The ThinkPad X1 Carbon Ultrabook is the perfect companion to NFL employees traveling and working at a football game – it’s light, durable and has up to 8.2 hours of unplugged battery life. The NFL also values the ThinkPad Precision Keyboard’s island style keys.

“We’ve found that our employees really appreciate the look and feel of the ThinkPad Precision Keyboard,” said Gaskill. “The keys are comfortable and the backlit keyboard makes it easier for our folks to work in dark environments when traveling to games.”

In addition to being portable, the ThinkPad X1 Carbon’s processing performance is well suited for the league’s needs. The NFL is a multimedia focused company, and video is a big part of employees’ daily jobs. It’s crucial that they have the processing power to review NFL footage and media clips with smooth scrolling and high-quality video. The ThinkPad X1 Carbon Ultrabook’s 3rd Generation Intel® Core™ i7 processor and Intel® HD Graphics 4000 graphics card provide them with the right mix of features.
BUSINESS RESULTS
The NFL currently relies on more than 1,700 Lenovo products in its operations across the organization, and continues to regularly refresh its fleet of products with the latest Lenovo technologies. Lenovo’s innovative, high quality products meet the NFL’s needs across the board and are vital to keeping the league’s IT operations running smoothly.

In addition to using Lenovo PCs while on the job, many NFL employees take advantage of Lenovo’s Corporate Employee Purchase Program (CEPP) and use their favorite Lenovo products at home. The CEPP offers NFL employees, players and their families the ability to purchase Lenovo PC products, accessories and options directly from Lenovo at discounted prices. These discounts cover Lenovo’s entire product portfolio, including Lenovo’s legendary Think line of PCs and the stylish consumer line of PCs. As a valued partner of Lenovo, the NFL has a unique website and a dedicated sales line where Lenovo representatives are ready to serve them.

“Lenovo has been a great business partner to the NFL. The relationship truly feels like a partnership, rather than just your average vendor relationship.”

- Michelle McKenna-Doyle