

## **Shooting Track Photography**

### Grimm C-6

As always, what you are about to read is ONLY A GUIDE; you must make decisions about the practicality of this information as you shoot because the light may be changing during the course of the meet. If you are shooting the Ft. Worth Indoor Meet you must be certain of your exposures. Do this by one of these two techniques: ask a more experienced professional or bracket your exposures. Which do you think would be the better choice?

Shoot with the sun to your back if the sun is out, but only after you've chosen the best shooting locations. If it's overcast, you'll have no severe shadows, but your contrast will be very low. Add a yellow filter in front of the lens if you're shooting B&W on a very cloudy day.

If it's real cold, drink or simply hold, coffee or hot chocolate to keep your hands warm and your body temperature up. Keep your hands as warm as possible to prevent camera shake. Increase your shutter speed a stop or two if you think you're chill is causing you to shake a great deal.

1. Be professional at all times! This rule supersedes all others.
2. Always arrive early and use the time to improve coverage. Look for the shots which involve the coach as well as the team members; you're far less likely to have an occasion to shoot them later. Also look for sweats with the school's name and/or banners that can be used as part of the image you want. Consider a shot while runners are still on the bus or are disembarking. Recognize that you have not yet taken a photo of the team members working out on weights; plan that for Monday!

3. Work with the other photographers from your school. It will make for better coverage if you will shoot from different locations around the track. You should walk within the parameters of where you are allowed to move before the first event begins and then talk with the other photographers about which places provide the best backgrounds. Be sure that the backgrounds are free of distractions such as telephone poles, street signs, trash, etc. Be sure you are covering field events as well as those on the track!

4. "Works well with others" Do you remember when your elementary teachers wrote this on your report card? Does it still apply? If you are the only shooter from your school you would be wise to talk to photographers from other schools and try to make an agreement to shoot their runners if they will shoot yours. Give them the name of your advisor and the school's address and request the same information from them.

5. Be predictive. Watch the action on the course and try to anticipate where there will be challenges for the lead or for a higher finish; turns are always good. Runners running through turns on middle and longer distances will be packed together more tightly by a telephoto lens

6. Take a variety of lenses and use all that you take. This way you can isolate your team's individuals for some shots and yet incorporate the concept of "team" in others. Don't overdo any particular type unless another

photographer is shooting a different lens at a different location, even then you would be wise to change lenses.

7. Vary the number of people in a photograph. Some shots should be singles and others should involve multiple people in the shot. Do this in the pre-race shots, during the races , and after the races are over. Look for that emotional shot that says, "I won" or its counterpart. As always, remember the rule that odd numbers of people are generally more intriguing visually than even numbers of subjects.

8. Shoot to freeze action first and to get depth of field second. Try to minimize grain by using a low film ISO.

9. Shoot from a variety of different angles.

10. Shoot from a variety of different camera angles. Don't ever be afraid to go to a knee to get a slower shutter speed if it won't affect your subject. Also consider moving all the photographers to the finish line when that is the best location, but place yourselves at different places

11. Consider panning on a dozen shots or so. Your success rate with these is likely to be very low; but if you get a good one you will be "the Bomb"!

12. See also "Shooting Cross Country"