

“Try not. Do, or do not. There is no try.”-Yoda

Always carry extra batteries

An extra camera body

Various lenses

Trashbag in case of rain

Photographs are the most essential part of any yearbook or newspaper. If the photos are bad, the publication is bad. Very few excellent shots are lucky shots. The front page photos are taken by pros who prepared themselves with the proper equipment, correct focus and exposure and an advantageous position.

You must check all these things before you shoot any photo, this is called thinking before you shoot. An image doesn't start with the camera, it ends there.

**Check focus.** An out of focus photo is worthless.

*aperture*-go for maximum depth of field unless you want to blur the background. The larger f-stops (2 or 2.8) let in more light and have less depth of field. Smaller f-stop numbers (16 or 22) allow more of the photo to be in focus. Two other things effect depth of field-the length of the lens and the distance you are from the subject. The area of focus is greater with a shorter, wider lens shot from farther away.

*Shutter speed*-Action shots need a speed of at least 1/250th of a second to avoid motion blur. Candid shots need a speed of at least 1/60th to avoid camera shake. If you must shoot at lower than 1/60th, use a tripod.

*Film speed (ISO)* -For bright situations and to have less grain, use a slower film (100 or 200) and in low light situations shoot a faster speed film (800 to 3200).

*composition*

Photography tips:

**Action-the best photos have action-whether implied or actual.**

- Capture a moment. To do this you have to always have your camera with you.
- Wait for fun shots or something interesting to happen. Focus on the subject and wait for the right shot. Look for expressions or reactions on faces. Look for motion, emotion. Shoot several (at least 3) of the subject showing emotion. Emotions are very subtle and slight changes in expression can make the difference in a good shot and a great shot.
- pick out the person who illustrates what you are wanting to shoot. Show faces and people. Have a strong center of interest, not the whole classroom.
- Photos where the subject is moving or looking need to be cropped properly. You must give the subject room to move or look, giving the feeling they have completed the movement.
- Don't let people mug for the camera. Turn the camera away or put the camera down when they do. If your school is used to this type of photo it doesn't take long to train the whole school to avoid posing for the camera.
- Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes. Don't shoot photos of people looking down at a book, wait for them to look up or better yet, change your angle to see their face.
- Hands are expressive. If a person is talking with their hands, make sure they are in the shot. Don't cut off people's legs. Show the entire body or shoot from the waist up.
- Panning- This is moving the camera with the subject and blurring the background. It creates the impression of speed or movement in the photo.

**Composition-this separates the snapshotter from the photographer.**

- Get closer. This is the biggest weakness in beginning photographers. You can't be shy. In a pep rally you have to be at the edge of the action which may put you all over the gym floor.

- Fill the frame as much as possible.
- Watch the background. Use the background as part of who the subject is or throw it out of focus so it doesn't interfere. Avoid lighted windows behind your subject.
- Watch all four sides and the four corners. Crop in the camera. Don't put the subjects head in the center of the photo because you end up with too much wasted space above them. Look at the whole photo, not just the subject.
- Choose a different angle. Avoid static, cliché angles. Don't settle for the first angle. Get on your knees, stand on a chair, look for the action and the face. Go for the odd angle and you can create a kind of action in your photos by shooting from above or below.
- Turn your camera vertically. Most beginners only shoot horizontal shot which doesn't do well in things like basketball.
- Rule of thirds. This is the #1 rule of composition. Don't put the subject in the center of the photo, Put them along the 1/3 line. This solves a lot of problems. Use this in 90% of your photos. On landscapes don't shoot half sky, half land. Shoot 1/3 of one and 2/3 of the other. For spaciousness and airiness, have more sky. For earthy, solid feel have more ground.
- Lines and leading lines. Diagonal lines add action, vertical lines add a feeling of solidness, dignity, power and horizontal lines add a feeling of rest, calm, peace.
- Framing-consider natural frames to direct the eye. This adds to a boring photo by framing it with foreground objects.
- Repetition-repeating shapes or patterns is an effective compositional technique.
- Simplicity. This is often overlooked as a rule of composition. Most great photos have a single, dominant subject. To achieve this, move in (or zoom in) close until the subject fills the frame.

### **Printing and the darkroom**

- Don't print it unless it's good. Slightly blurry, too gray, too dark or too grainy photos aren't usable or improvable. Be careful with auto focus camera. Make sure you know how to use it properly or it can focus on the wrong subject (like the background or foreground) or it won't focus because you are too close. Read your manual.
- Developing 3200 speed film to reduce grain-First, it is always best to start with 3200 speed film to shoot night sports, but sometimes you even have to push that film. When developing, presoak 3 minutes for 3200 and 5 minutes for film pushed to 6400 in 75° water. Use slow, minimal agitation (4 or 5 rotations of the tank) every minute.
- Common problems-  
 developer spots -do an accurate test strip so you can leave print in developer the full time  
 white finger prints or spots. Don't put fingers in the chemicals, use tongs and don't mix tongs from tray to tray.  
 Print is torn at water spot.-Make sure print is completely dry before stacking.  
 Developed film is clear with numbers showing-it never went through the camera  
 Developed film is clear with no numbers showing-the film was fixed before developing

### **Cropping**

Proper cropping of photos is essential to ensure that the best photos appear in the publication. Everyone on the staff should learn all of these rules (writers, too!)

don't leave unclaimed body parts in the photos (from another person not in the photo)

Don't amputate a subject. Leave arms and legs in the photo

Leave space for the action in the photo to continue. Do not create an imaginary wall for the action to end.

Crop photos so that the faces in the photo won't be in the gutter of the fold of the pages of the publication.

Avoid heads on a platter by including shoulders in a mug shot.

Choose a photo with good contrast. All photos should have distinct areas of black, white and shades of gray.

Look for clean photos with no scratches, fingerprints or dust spots.

Choose photos with action or emotion.

Choose photos with minimum grain or don't enlarge the photo or a part of the photo too much or it will look grainy.

Avoid choosing photos with a distracting background or things growing out of subjects heads.

### **Keep track of your negatives and prints**

- Murphy's law-if any print or negative can get lost or damaged it will. Develop a filing system and stick to it.

Use a three ring notebook to file negatives in sleeves with a corresponding three ring notebook containing the contact prints. Number negatives and contacts with the same number. (example A-1- could be Andy's first contact print) Keep a log of each contact print so those searching for a particular photo don't have to search.

Use the back of each contact sheet to write important information on the event while still fresh on the photographer's mind. Use a colored grease pencil to circle all usable photos (so the person looking for a print for their page won't choose a bad one).

File the photos that are printed in folders or spread folders.

- Negatives never go home with the photographer. Whether you choose to file the negatives in individual photographer folders or in one large folder, all of these should stay in a safe (guarded) place in the room.

### **Portraits, posed photos-trying to capture a person's personality in a photo**

- Environmental portraits are the trend in photojournalism-shooting the subject in a setting that provides quick identification of that person (like a jockey in his silks with a horse or a scientist in his lab coat in a lab). These portraits aren't posed just for the photographer but presented in a clean, straightforward manner.

- Focus on eyes

- Hands. Do something with them or cut them out of the photo. Put them so the edge faces the camera (pinkie toward the camera) so they appear smaller.

- Have someone else be behind you to talk to and relax the subject. Shoot at least a roll of the person to get them to relax. Don't try to get them to say "cheese" just shoot a shutter speed fast enough to stop any actions (like talking).

- When shooting two subjects, Don't put the heads level, line the eyes of one subject up with the chin or mouth of the other subject.

- Raise the subjects chin (or lower camera position)

  - make the eyes smaller

  - make the mouth larger

  - make the nose shorter

  - make the chin larger

  - minimize double chins

  - minimize baldness

- Lower the subjects head to:

  - make the eyes larger

  - make the nose longer

make the chin smaller  
minimize eyeglass reflection  
accentuate double chins

## **Sports**

Without the proper equipment shooting good sports photos can be difficult but not impossible. Cameras-An SLR with manual adjustments is best so you can control the shutter speed and aperture and change lenses when needed.

Shutter speed-It is very important to shoot sports action with a minimum of 1/250 shutter speed.

Automatic focus-These can be dangerous when shooting sports because the camera may not focus fast enough or may not focus on the right subject. You will need to prefocus and be ready to take the shot. Having a camera where you can turn off the auto focus is a good idea.

lenses-For baseball, volleyball, wrestling or tennis an 85-135mm lens should be adequate. For soccer and football, a longer lens is better. 200mm is the standard. The cost of these lenses is directly related to the largest aperture opening of the lens. The 200 mm, 2.8 aperture lenses are best for night football but can be costly.

Film-On bright sunny days you can shoot with 100 to 200 speed film but for indoor or night sports you'll need to buy 400 speed film and push it or better yet, buy 800, 1600 or 3200 film.

Motor drive-or power winder is useful when shooting sports. A power winder advances film at 2 1/2 frames per second while a motor drive can do 5 frames per second.

•Zone focus and wait for the action to hit that spot. Anticipation is the key. Focus on a certain spot and wait for the action to get there (like the basketball goal, free throw line, finish line or high jump bar) or focus on a certain player (works well in volleyball) and wait for the ball to get to them.

•Get reaction shots

•In action shots, get the ball.

•Shoot the game, not just your team.

•Read the sports section of the newspaper, *Sports Illustrated*.

•Watch the sports you plan to shoot and think about the best camera angles being used by the cameras.

•Watch some game on TV through the lens you will be shooting.

•Shoot for the peak moment of action.

•Watch the pros that are at the game and don't be afraid to ask questions.

•Shoot the sports no one else does so the judges will look longer at your photos.

•Be aggressive, call sports activities people to get a press pass (ask for two passes and bring another photographer with you to a new venue)

•Write down what settings you used at an event so you can adjust the next time if the photos don't come out perfect.

•At all sporting events, there are "safe shots," ones that you know will come out. Team on the sidelines, coach, spectators. You can lower your shutter speed to shoot these.

•Shoot faster film (1600 or 3200) rather than pushing your film.

•If your film isn't fast enough to shoot at 1/250th but it will shoot at 1/125th you can use several techniques to make sure you get some shots without motion blur.

-Stand where the action comes directly at you instead of across from you

-Wait and take shots when the action slows down or comes to a halt (like that split second stop at the peak of a jump shot or a rebound.)

-Use a monopod to reduce camera movement blur.

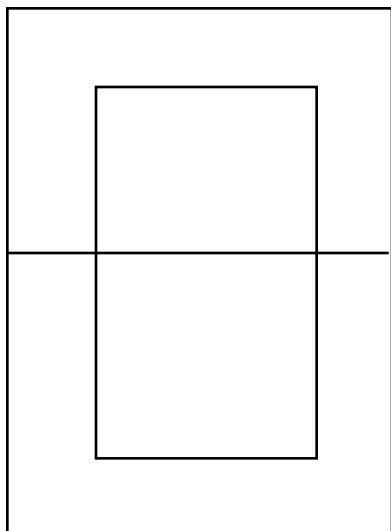
-Use panning (move the camera with the action and blur only the background.)

- One of the hardest things in sports photography is to keep the subject in focus. Practice while shooting the team's practice. Increasing your depth of field (area of focus) will also help because more of the field or court is in focus. Understand that the smaller your aperture (that's the larger numbers like 22, 16) allows for more depth of field. Shooting day games allow you to have a larger depth of field.
- At day games, watch the background. Since you have more depth of field, the other side of the football field or basketball court can be distracting in the action of your shot.
- Know the sport. It is much easier to get good shots when you know what is going on. Know what happens on a fourth down, know when the quarterback is more likely to throw, know when the guy on first will try to steal.
- Know where to stand and move around for a variety of shots
- Don't wait for the action to start, shoot before the game, shoot the time-outs, the halftime and the emotions after the game.
- Shoot the practices-Teams spend 80% of their time practice so 80% of what you shoot should be at their practice. Also shoot the bus ride, the pep talks from the coach, and the game or match.

#### **Other info**

- The mind (or eye) prefers:  
color over black and white  
movement over no movement  
curves over straight lines  
sharp focus over blur  
light not darkness  
odd numbers, not even

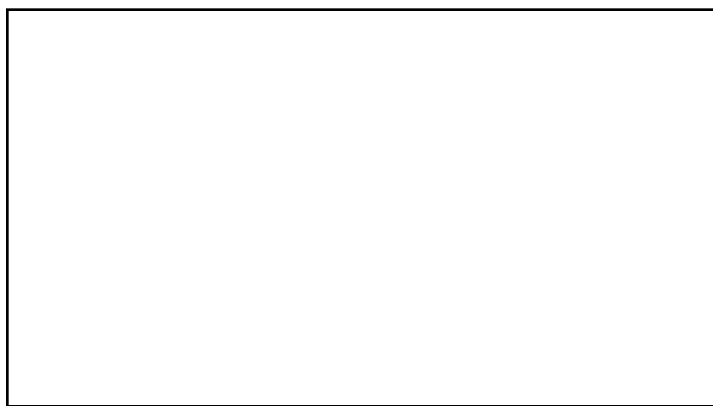
**Tennis**  
**400 speed film, daytime**



  
**wide-angle  
to medium**



 **180mm lens and up** 



**85 mm and  
up**

**300 mm and up**

