



At stadium or sandlot, get good sports pictures

Whether you're an avid Detroit Lions fan or prefer the intimacy of your son's little league athletic team, obtaining good sports photographs can be exciting and rewarding.

Sports pictures with impact are easier to obtain than you might think. Just follow a few practical guidelines, and you'll be delighted with the results.

First and foremost, learn to anticipate the game's action. Learn to predict the decisive moment, the peak of the action that will reward you with that truly exciting shot. Learning the fundamentals of the sport and developing a hair-trigger state of readiness will help you capture the action.

Knowing the mechanics of your camera well will also free you to concentrate on the sport and develop that state of alertness.

Here are some ideas on equipment and procedures to help you get better sports pictures:

LENSES: Telephoto lenses are required to bring the action close and give your photos impact. If you can get fairly near the action, a lens of 85mm to 200mm will be satisfactory. When you're stuck back in the stands, a longer lens (about 400mm) may be in order.

Don't forget, a tele-extender is an inexpensive way to obtain a long telephoto. Zoom lenses, which give you a variety of focal length choices, can be very handy, too.



A more intimate kind of sports shot will reward you with a facial expression of challenge and determination. Monte Nagler snapped this picnic sports picture of Randy Bidlofsky.

FILMS: Fast films are recommended for sports photography.

For black and white, Kodak Tri-X or Ilford HP-5 (both ASA 400) are excellent selections.

For color, Kodachrome 400 (prints) or High-Speed Ektachrome (slides) will perform well.

Remember, the black and white films and Ektachrome 400 can be shot at higher film speeds (pushed) when required by low lighting conditions. With special processing, excellent results will be obtained without noticeable loss of quality.

FILTERS: Correction filters normally will not be required, but a skylight (1A) or an ultra-violet (UV) filter will protect each lens from potential dirt and scratches common in the hustle of sports photography.

SHUTTER SPEEDS: Pay particular attention to your shutter speeds.

A fast speed will "freeze" the action at its peak. A slow shutter speed will produce a totally different effect — one of a pleasing "blur" of motion.

Also, try "panning" the camera with the action to get a blurred background behind a sharp subject.

METERING: Always set your exposure beforehand or you'll miss the action every time. It's easy to preset the camera at the proper aperture/shutter speed combination and then be ready for the action.

With automatic cameras, make sure that the programmed apertures and shutter speeds will give you the results you want.

PREFOCUS: Try to anticipate where the action will be and prefocus on this spot. Put the depth-of-field of your lens to work for you, placing it where the action will happen.

Remember, depth-of-field is increased with a smaller lens opening and diminished with a larger opening. Learning the depth-of-field characteristics for each of your lenses will help you immensely in prefocusing.

You needn't restrict your shooting to organized athletic competitions. Backyard sporting events with the neighborhood kids will produce exceptional candid and personal results.

The basic guidelines of good sports photography will apply here, too. So don't go to sporting events as only a spectator.

Go as a spectator photographer and capture on film those exciting moments that will give you your own "instant replays" to enjoy for a long time to come.

© 1989, Monte Nagler. The writer is an area businessman and president of the Greater Detroit Camera Clubs Council.



Confined to the stands of a stadium, Tom Riordan, O&E executive editor, used a long telephoto lens and his alert eye to capture football action at its peak.

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