

Guidance for Young Sports Photographers

Photographs are an excellent way of capturing images and evidence on all aspects of day to day life. As a young sports reporter you can help to capture invaluable images of young people's involvement in activities that are taking place as part of the Sport England Sport Unlimited project. The shots that you take will help us to illustrate participants' enjoyment and involvement in the activities and above all the success of the project in your region.

This guidance sheet has been put together to help ensure that you take the best possible photos as well as ensuring that you adhere to the appropriate guidelines.

Safety ...

Both your safety and the safety of those being photographed is vitally important, so by following these simple guidelines we can help to protect everyone.

- Always let someone know where you are going and what time you are expected back
- Keep a mobile phone on you, but make sure it is on silent whilst you are working!
- Ensure consent forms have been received before any photos are taken
- Declare any conflicts of interest
- Don't get into a situation where abuse of trust may occur and don't work with family or close friends
- Children and young people should be protected from harm and treated with dignity and respect. If you are worried that a child is being abused, you have a duty to report it to the person responsible within the organisation where you are working (e.g. school / club)
- Avoid any actions which would lead others to question your motivation / intentions
- Do not give personal contact details (e.g. phone numbers / email addresses) to young people
- Clothing should be appropriate and not provocative, revealing or offensive
- Be sensitive to the feelings of children and if they are uncomfortable, do not force them to have their photograph taken
- Do not take photos in a one-to-one setting or where there is no surrounding context, e.g. sporting activity
- Ensure the child knows why the photographs are being taken
- Do not use mobile phones to take photographs of children or young people
- Do not take photographs in secret without the children's knowledge

Photography - tips and tricks (info courtesy of Julian at West Yorkshire Sport)

On arrival at the sessions ...

You must introduce yourself to the session organiser / coach when you arrive and make sure that all participants / parents have given consent to be photographed.

What matters ...

Sports photography is all about speed. The faster the picture is taken, the less chance there is of motion blur.

It may be an idea to find out how long the delay is between pressing the button on your digital camera and the picture actually being taken.

Details ...

There are a few things worse than having a brilliant photo rejected because the evaluation team don't know who is in the picture. Take names and contact details wherever you go - and check spellings (or at least take the details of the activity, location and date).

Embed these details into the jpeg file and then they won't get lost! To do this, right click on the jpeg and select properties / get info. Items to include: data taken, event, photographer, people in the photograph. Computer search facilities will read these hidden details and find you the picture you want out of the thousands you don't.

Equipment ...

A good photographer will be able to take a great picture with a mediocre camera. Some cameras allow more manual control than others, it is highly recommended that you learn what these controls do!

It's not about how much money you spend on equipment - it's about how much effort you put into bettering your craft!

Pixel Count: Less is more ...

For web work, pixel count isn't a big problem as computer screens are rarely much more than 1,000 pixels wide. A lower setting will help the camera take faster pictures - so set the camera on a smaller size like 1600x1200 instead of something like 3072x2304 or bigger.

Film Speed: Push the Limits ...

Some digital cameras replicate the days of the 35mm cameras that use films of different speeds. Lower speed film (e.g. 100 asa) takes crisper pictures with less graininess, but takes longer. Sport photographers often use high speed film setting like 800 asa, especially when shooting indoors or in low light conditions.

Aperture: Open Wide ...

It's all about the glass. The bigger the lens, the quicker the camera can get the light in. Compact cameras are great, but a small lens takes longer to take a picture. If the camera has an aperture control setting - set it as wide as you can eg. F2.8 rather than F8. A wide aperture takes pictures quicker, but loses focus closer and further away from the subject - 'depth of field'. This is no bad thing as a blurred background gives the focused area more impact.

Focus: DIY ...

Autofocus cameras are great - but some are faster than others, especially in low light conditions. A half-second delay between pressing the shutter and taking the picture could make the difference between a killer shot and an empty frame. Learn to use manual focus and your reaction time will be quicker and you will become a better sports photographer.

Zoom: Get in closer ...

Take a look at the sporting pages of a newspaper, how close was the photographer? A zoom lens brings you closer to the action, but makes following the ball more difficult and leads to camera shake. Try to autofocus on a patch of ground roughly where you want to take the shot and then switch it off.

Multi shot: Rapid fire results ...

Before digital cameras, a photographer was limited to 36 pictures before they had to change films. Now we are limited only by the camera's memory card. Use this freedom by experimenting with multi shot features of your camera. A high speed, low res setting will help the camera take a rapid series of pictures in a short burst, you will be able to choose the best of the bunch. Don't rely on it, it's a habit that can make you lazy and you can miss the perfect moment, but it's worth trying.