

TM

TrailMark Yearbooks

Photo Curriculum Series

COMPLETE CURRICULUM GUIDE

Photo Curriculum

for High School Yearbook Programs

Camera settings, position diagrams, shot checklists,
and pro tips for every high school sport and event.
Designed for yearbook photographers at every skill level.

WHAT'S INSIDE

15 Sports Guides

- Football
- Basketball
- Baseball
- Softball
- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Wrestling
- Swimming & Diving
- Track & Field
- Cross Country
- Tennis
- Golf
- Cheerleading
- Lacrosse
- Hockey

8 Event Guides

- Homecoming Game
- Homecoming Dance
- Prom
- Graduation
- Pep Rally
- Theater & Fine Arts
- Band & Orchestra
- Spirit Week

Each guide: Camera Settings • Position Diagram • Shot Checklist • Pro Tips • Quick Reference

Table of Contents

SPORTS GUIDES	
• Football	6
• Basketball	12
• Baseball	18
• Softball	24
• Soccer	30
• Volleyball	36
• Wrestling	42
• Swimming & Diving	48
• Track & Field	54
• Cross Country	60
• Tennis	66
• Golf	72
• Cheerleading	78
• Lacrosse	84
• Hockey	90

EVENT GUIDES	
• Homecoming Game	96
• Homecoming Dance	102
• Prom	108
• Graduation	114
• Pep Rally	120
• Theater & Fine Arts	126
• Band & Orchestra	132
• Spirit Week	138



HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Football

Photography Guide

Football demands the fastest shutter speeds and best field positioning in high school sports. Day or night, this guide covers every situation from kickoff to the final whistle.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Day & night exposure guide

02

Field Position Map

6 positions for full coverage

03

Shot Checklist

Every moment your spread needs

04

Pro Tips

Anticipation, burst mode & emotion

Football demands fast shutter speeds to freeze motion. Settings vary significantly between day and night games. Always shoot in RAW. Use burst mode on every action shot. Focus on the ball carrier, not the pile.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Day Game (Sunny)

Shutter Speed	1/2000s or faster
Aperture	f/2.8 – f/4
ISO	200 – 400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight
Metering	Evaluative

Night Game (Stadium Lights)

Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 6400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Tungsten / 3200K
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best all-around football lens
- Reach from sideline to end zone
- Fast enough for night games
- Works for close and far plays

300mm or 400mm f/4

- Compress action from end zone
- Reach across the full field
- Ideal for isolating players
- Use monopod for stability

24-70mm f/2.8

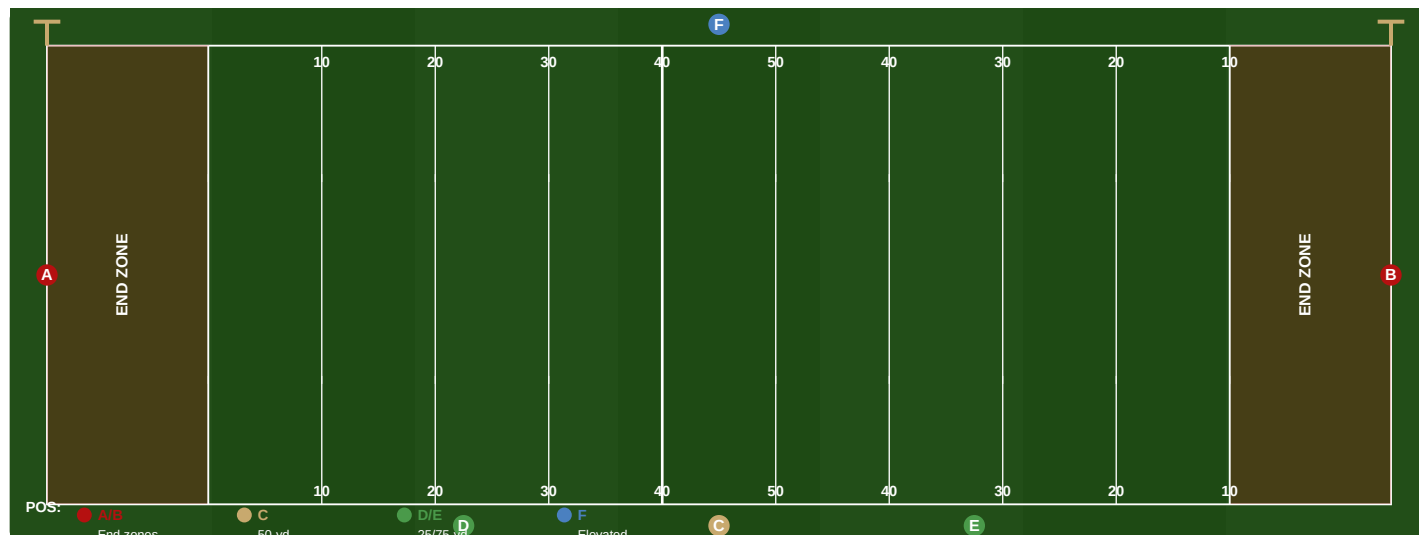
- Bench celebrations and reactions
- Sideline environment shots
- Team huddles and coaches
- Wide environmental context

Night Game Tip:

Stadium lights flicker — use shutter speeds that are multiples of 1/60s (1/120, 1/250, 1/500, 1/1000) to avoid banding. Arrive 20 minutes early to dial in your exposure before kickoff. Test shots under the lights before players take the field.

Position based on game situation. Move between positions during timeouts, penalties, and halftime.

PHOTOGRAPHER POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

A / B — End Zones

- Best for: TDs, goal-line plays, extra points
- Stand in corner of end zone behind goal post
- Shoot toward play — players running at you
- Switch ends each quarter if needed

C — 50-Yard Line

- Best for: all-around coverage and formations
- Primary position for a single photographer
- Captures plays on both sides of the field
- Great for halftime shows and coin toss

D / E — 25 & 75 Yard

- Best for: red zone plays and field goals
- Move here when offense is in scoring position
- Angle toward the near end zone
- Captures linemen and skill positions equally

F — Press Box / Elevated Position:

If your stadium has a press box, shoot from above for overhead shots of formations and plays developing. Requires 400mm+ lens. Great for unique yearbook spreads — formations look like Xs and Os from above.

Use this checklist every game. Aim to check every box before the final whistle.

PRE-GAME

- ☐ Team warming up on the field
- ☐ Captains at coin toss
- ☐ Coaches on the sideline
- ☐ Players in tunnel / entrance
- ☐ Full stadium crowd at kickoff

OFFENSE

- ☐ Quarterback in throwing motion
- ☐ Running back breaking through
- ☐ Wide receiver making a catch
- ☐ Touchdown celebration — pile on
- ☐ Spike or celebration in end zone

SPECIAL TEAMS

- ☐ Kickoff — ball leaving kicker foot
- ☐ Punt returner fielding the ball
- ☐ Field goal — ball through uprights
- ☐ Long snapper and holder on kicks

DEFENSE

- ☐ Linebacker blitzing through gap
- ☐ Defensive back breaking up pass
- ☐ Sack — QB going down with ball
- ☐ Interception — hands on the ball
- ☐ Defensive celebration after a stop

SIDELINE

- ☐ Coach reacting to a big play
- ☐ Players on bench helmet off
- ☐ Cheerleaders during a timeout
- ☐ Student section reacting to play
- ☐ Scoreboard at a key moment

POST-GAME

- ☐ Team handshake at midfield
- ☐ Players celebrating a win
- ☐ Seniors on their last home game
- ☐ Coach address to team post-game
- ☐ Trophy if playoff or championship

Anticipate, Not React

- Watch offense formation before the snap
- Follow the running back out of the backfield
- Watch the QB eyes — they tell you target
- Position toward direction of attack early

Master Burst Mode

- Hold shutter through the entire play
- Start burst before the snap, not after
- Peak action is 1/10th second — burst catches it
- Clear your memory card before every game

Get the Emotion

- The celebration is often better than the TD
- Shoot the bench reaction on big plays
- Senior Night — capture every senior with family
- Losing team reaction is powerful and honest

Work the Sideline Safely

- Always know where the play is going
- Never turn your back to the field
- Stay behind the white sideline boundary
- Wear dark neutral clothing — be invisible

Night Game Lighting

- Test your exposure 20 minutes before kickoff
- Stadium lights create hot spots — test angles
- Overcast days are ideal — soft even light
- Shoot with the sun at your back when possible

Yearbook Priorities

- Get at least one photo of every key player
- Jersey numbers visible — captions need them
- Shoot horizontal for spreads, vertical for pages
- Band, cheerleaders, student section matter too

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

DAY GAME

1/2000s • f/2.8-4 • ISO 200-400 • Continuous AF • Burst

NIGHT GAME

1/800-1000s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-6400 • Tungsten WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. QB in throwing motion — sideline angle, stadium behind
2. Touchdown celebration — get in the end zone early
3. Running back breaking tackle — freeze the contact
4. Defensive back interception — hands above head
5. Sack — QB going down, lineman celebrating
6. Student section reaction — after a big play
7. Coach mid-call — emotion on the sideline
8. Full team on the field — wide shot everyone in frame
9. Night sky / stadium lights — set the scene
10. Post-game — win or lose, emotion after final whistle

Basketball

Photography Guide

Basketball delivers non-stop action in a confined space.

Every second something is happening — freeze peak action, capture emotion, and work around the officials.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Indoor gym lighting guide

02

Court Position Map

6 positions for full coverage

03

Shot Checklist

Every moment your spread needs

04

Pro Tips

Gym light, crowds and emotion

Gym lighting is the biggest challenge in school sports photography. Most gyms are severely underlit — push ISO high. Always shoot wide open (lowest f-stop) and test your exposure during warmups before the game starts.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Standard Gym (Fluorescent)

Shutter Speed	1/500s – 1/640s
Aperture	f/1.8 – f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Fluorescent / Auto
Metering	Center-Weighted

Well-Lit / LED Gym

Shutter Speed	1/640s – 1/800s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	800 – 1600
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Auto / 4000K
Metering	Evaluative

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best all-around basketball lens
- Reach from baseline to half court
- Fast enough for most gyms
- Works for all court positions

85mm or 50mm f/1.4

- Maximum light in dark gyms
- Shallow depth blurs background
- Best for close action and emotion
- Ideal for older fluorescent gyms

24-70mm f/2.8

- Bench and sideline coverage
- Team huddles during timeouts
- Wide crowd and environment shots
- Halftime ceremonies

Gym Lighting Warning:

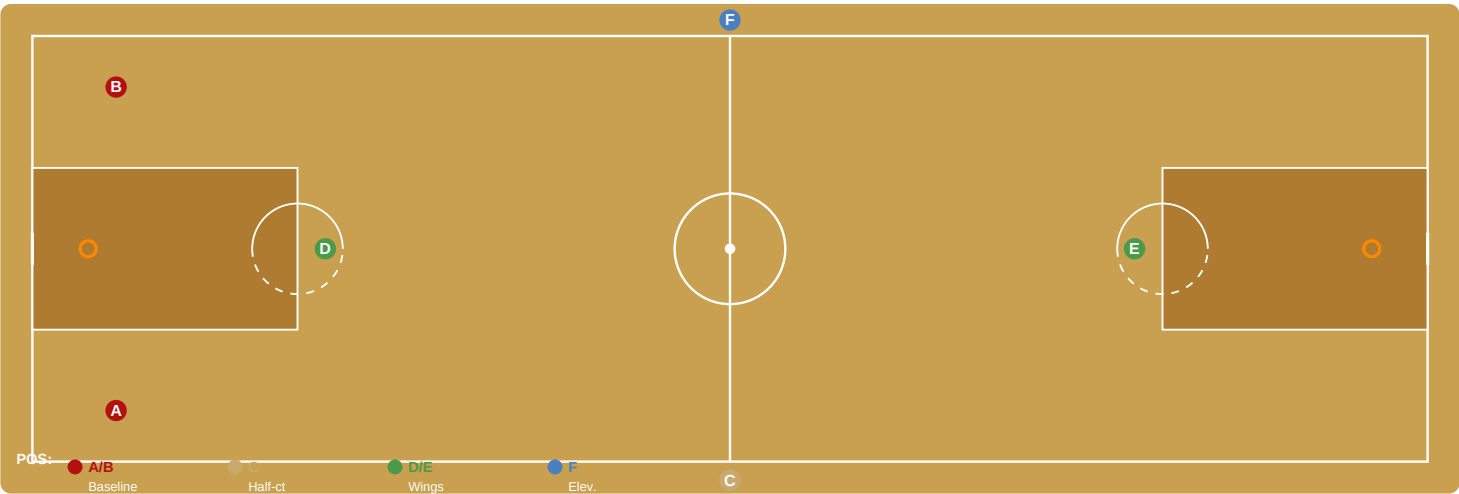
Fluorescent lights flicker — use 1/500s or slower to avoid banding in your images.

Test 5-10 shots during warmups and review on your LCD before the game starts. Adjust ISO first.



Basketball photographers must move constantly. Reposition every few possessions — baseline for drives, wing for jump shots.

PHOTOGRAPHER POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

A/B — Baseline Corners

- Best for: dunks, layups, under-basket action
- Shoot toward the rim — players running at you
- Switch ends each quarter or at halftime

C — Half-Court Sideline

- Best for: full-court breaks and transition play
- Shows both teams simultaneously
- Jump shots at the arc visible from here
- Good for free throws at either end

D/E — Wing Positions

- Best for: jump shots, post moves, drives
- Angle toward the near basket
- Good secondary when baseline is blocked
- Captures the defensive battle clearly

F — Elevated / Balcony Position:
If your gym has a balcony or elevated running track, shoot from above for overhead plays, formations, and crowd shots. Requires 85-200mm from most elevated positions. Great for feature spreads and opening section pages.

Use this checklist every game. Basketball moves fast — work the list between possessions, not during live play.

PRE-GAME

- ☐ Team warming up — layup lines
- ☐ Coaches meeting at half court
- ☐ Jump ball tip-off moment
- ☐ Introductions if spotlighted

OFFENSE

- ☐ Player driving to basket — freeze contact
- ☐ Jump shot at peak of release
- ☐ Layup or dunk — arm extended
- ☐ Post player low post move
- ☐ Assist — passer and receiver in frame

BENCH AND EMOTION

- ☐ Bench reaction to a big play
- ☐ Timeout huddle with coaches
- ☐ Player consoling or hyping teammate
- ☐ Student section in full noise

DEFENSE

- ☐ Block — hand on ball at peak
- ☐ Steal — moment of hand on ball
- ☐ Full-court press in action
- ☐ Defensive player drawing the charge

ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ Full gym crowd — wide angle shot
- ☐ Scoreboard at a key moment
- ☐ Cheerleaders during timeout
- ☐ Mascot in action on the sideline

POST-GAME

- ☐ Team celebration or handshake line
- ☐ Coach and players post-game
- ☐ Senior Night with family on court
- ☐ Championship trophy if applicable

Anticipate the Drive

- Watch ball-handler stance — inside foot forward signals a drive to that side
- Begin burst before contact, not after
- Position on the help-side to capture attacker and defender
- Drives to the basket are the best basketball shots — prioritize them

Freeze the Jump Shot

- Start burst at the beginning of the shooting motion
- Peak of the jump with ball at full extension is the hero shot
- Shooter face showing concentration makes the best portrait
- Shoot from slightly below rim height for best angle

Work the Emotion

- Timeout huddles are pure storytelling — get in close
- Bench reaction after a 3-pointer is often better than the shot
- Foul trouble face or disagreement with a call tells a real story
- The final buzzer — both teams, two completely different emotions

Beat the Officials

- Refs block shots constantly — learn to anticipate and move
- Shoot from low angle to shoot under the arm
- Communicate with refs before the game — many will adjust for you
- Have a spotter watching for officials approaching

Handle the Gym Light

- Test ISO during warmups — do not guess
- Set white balance manually to match your gym lights
- If photos look green or purple, adjust color temperature in camera
- Shoot RAW plus JPG so you can fix white balance in editing

Yearbook-Specific

- Get every player who scores or contributes significantly
- Shoot vertically for profile pages, horizontally for spreads
- Team huddle shots need jersey numbers visible for captions
- Capture the crowd — basketball crowds are the most energetic



Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

STANDARD GYM

1/500s • f/1.8-2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Continuous AF • Burst

LED GYM

1/640s • f/2.8 • ISO 800-1600 • Auto WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Drive to the basket — freeze the contact moment
2. Dunk or layup — arm at full extension toward the rim
3. Jump shot — player at peak of jump, ball above head
4. Block — hand on ball, both players in frame
5. Bench eruption — players off the bench reacting
6. Overtime buzzer beater or the final buzzer
7. Timeout huddle — coach drawing up a play
8. Student section at full noise after a big moment
9. Free throw — concentration on shooter face
10. Post-game — win or loss, the emotion after the final whistle

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Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Baseball

Photography Guide

Baseball is a game of moments separated by anticipation. The best shots come to photographers who read the game, stay patient, and burst at the right instant.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Day and night game exposure guide

02

Field Position Map

6 photographer positions mapped

03

Shot Checklist

Every inning, every situation

04

Pro Tips

Reading the game and staying ready

Baseball is largely played in bright daylight — settings are more forgiving than basketball. Night games need ISO adjustment. Use a fast shutter to freeze the pitch and swing. A 300-400mm lens from behind the dugout fence gives the best compression.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Day Game (Sunny)	
Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/2000s
Aperture	f/4 – f/5.6
ISO	100 – 400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight
Metering	Evaluative

Night Game (Field Lights)	
Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/2.8 – f/4
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Tungsten / 3200K
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

300-400mm f/4-5.6
- Reach from dugout to pitcher - Compress field for dramatic effect - Best for pitch and swing moments - Use monopod for stability all game

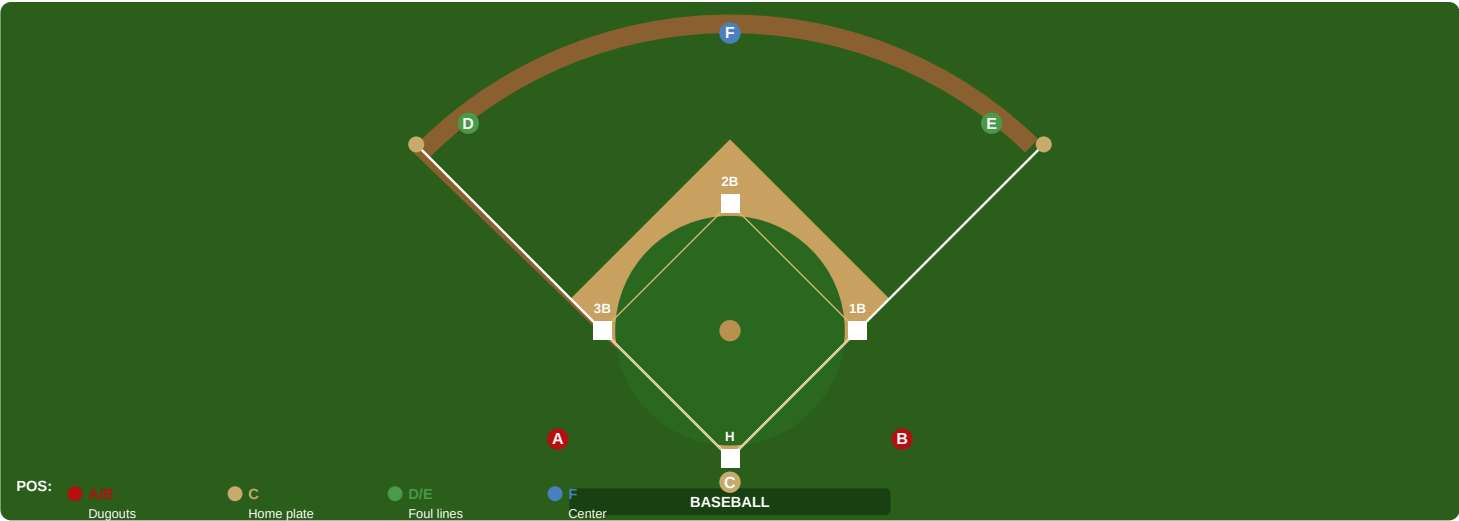
70-200mm f/2.8
- Versatile for most field positions - Good from dugout fence or baseline - Works for both action and portraits - Best choice for night games

24-70mm f/2.8
- Dugout candids and bench moments - Wide team celebration after wins - Handshake line and post-game - Crowd and environment shots



Baseball allows more time to reposition than most sports. Move between positions during pitching changes and between innings.

PHOTOGRAPHER POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

A/B — Dugout Sides

- Shoot through the fence for depth
- 1B side: steals, infield plays
- 3B side: batting, ground balls
- Switch sides based on action

C — Behind Home Plate

- High angle through the backstop net
- Best for pitch and batter swing
- Catcher and umpire add depth
- Home plate tag plays visible

D / E / F — Outfield

- Foul lines: diving catches
- Center field: pitcher-batter profile
- Outfield wall catches and leaping grabs
- Use 300-400mm from these positions

Baseball gives you time between pitches — use it to reposition, review shots, and anticipate the next play.

PRE-GAME

- ☐ Team warming up in outfield
- ☐ Pitcher in bullpen warming up
- ☐ Catcher in full gear at home plate
- ☐ First pitch ceremony if applicable

PITCHING AND HITTING

- ☐ Pitcher at full wind-up and release
- ☐ Batter in full swing — bat and ball
- ☐ Strikeout — catcher framing the pitch
- ☐ Batter reacting to a ball or strike

BASE RUNNING

- ☐ Stolen base — feet and tag frozen
- ☐ Runner sliding headfirst into base
- ☐ Pick-off attempt — runner diving back
- ☐ Rounding third waved home

FIELDING

- ☐ Diving catch in the outfield
- ☐ Infielder ranging for a ground ball
- ☐ Double play turn at second base
- ☐ Outfielder leaping at the wall
- ☐ Catcher framing a pitch or throwing

DUGOUT AND EMOTION

- ☐ Walk-off celebration — pure joy
- ☐ Dugout eruption after a big hit
- ☐ Pitcher pumping fist after a strikeout
- ☐ Post-inning high fives in dugout

POST-GAME

- ☐ Team handshake line at home plate
- ☐ Coach address on the field
- ☐ Senior Day with family on the field
- ☐ Trophy or plaque at playoffs

Read the Count

- Full count with runner on first almost always means the runner goes — be ready
- 2-strike counts produce the best defensive plays — be positioned for throws
- 0-0 first pitch swings are often the biggest hacks — be in burst already
- Walk-up music ends = pitch incoming in roughly 10 seconds — get ready

Freeze the Swing

- Start burst when the pitcher begins the delivery, not at ball release
- Bat-ball contact happens in 1/500th of a second — only burst catches it
- Best swing shots: follow-through with bat blurred, eyes still on ball
- Shoot from slightly above first base for cleanest swing profile

The Stolen Base

- Watch the runner at first — a wide lead signals a steal attempt
- Set focus on second base early and wait for the runner to arrive
- The tag down the baseline tells the story — freeze the tag and the foot
- Headfirst slides toward camera are the most dramatic baseball shots

Patience Pays Off

- Baseball has natural pauses — use them to compose and reposition
- Review shots between innings to adjust settings before its too late
- Do not shoot everything — wait for peak action moments
- Pre-focus on a base when you predict a play

Work the Dugout

- Some of the best baseball stories are told in the dugout
- Between innings: candid moments, conversations, and emotion
- Helmet on the wall and a player staring at the field is powerful
- Shoot through the fence for natural framing and added depth

Yearbook Needs

- Every pitcher and cleanup hitter needs at least one great action shot
- Jersey numbers must be visible — captions require accurate identification
- Get team celebrations — baseball celebrations are genuinely joyful
- The dugout fence shot is iconic — do not leave a game without it



Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

DAY GAME

1/1000-2000s • f/4-5.6 • ISO 100-400 • Continuous AF • Burst

NIGHT GAME

1/800-1000s • f/2.8-4 • ISO 1600-3200 • Tungsten WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

- Pitcher at full release — ball visible leaving the hand
- Batter in full swing — bat and ball in same frame
- Stolen base slide — freeze the tag and the foot
- Diving outfield catch — player fully extended horizontal
- Walk-off celebration — pure unguarded joy
- Double play turn — middle infielder airborne
- Strikeout pump — pitcher fist pump after the K
- Dugout shot through the fence — candid moment
- Catcher framing a pitch — full gear and focus
- Post-game handshake line — sportsmanship

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Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Softball

Photography Guide

Softball is fast, compact, and packed with emotion. The smaller field means you are closer to the action — use that proximity to capture detail and expression.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Outdoor and artificial light guide

02

Field Position Map

Best spots for every play

03

Shot Checklist

Every moment your spread needs

04

Pro Tips

Using proximity to your advantage

Softball is played on a smaller diamond — you are closer to the action, which helps in lower light situations. The underhand windmill pitch is one of the most unique shots in high school sports — use burst to freeze the release.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Outdoor Day Game

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/1600s
Aperture	f/4 – f/5.6
ISO	100 – 400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight
Metering	Evaluative

Artificial or Evening Lights

Shutter Speed	1/800s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Tungsten / Auto
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best all-around softball lens
- Smaller field means better reach
- Good for windmill and swing moments
- Works for both day and evening

The Windmill Pitch

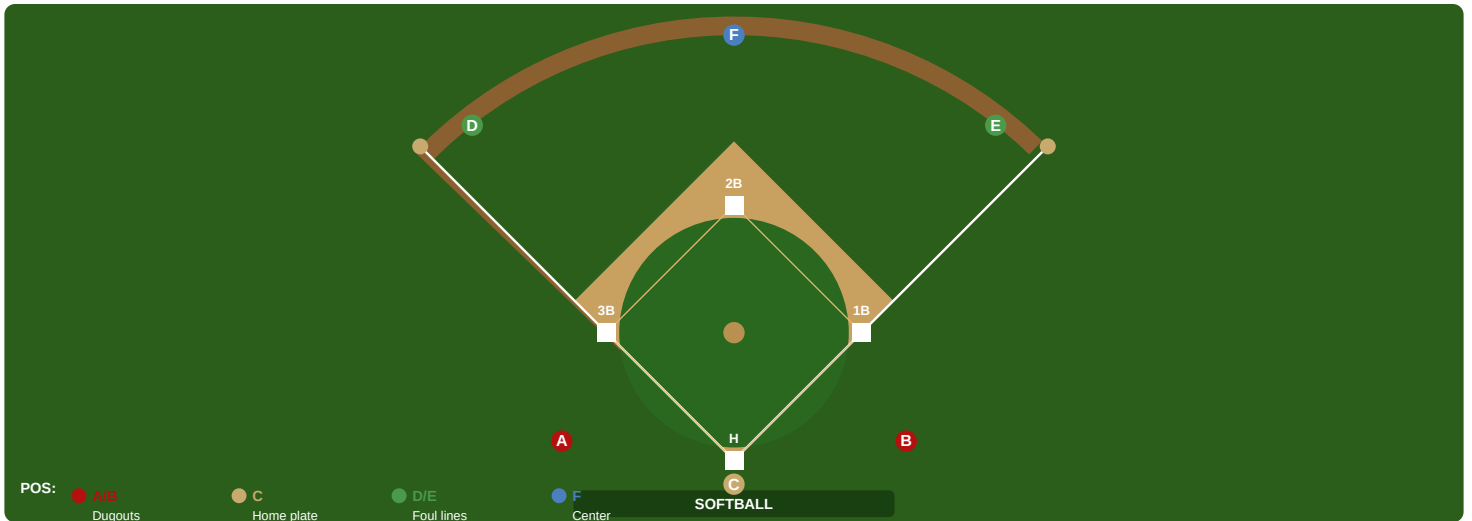
- Start burst at the arm circle beginning
- Ball-at-hip-release is the key frame
- Pitcher face during delivery is powerful
- Unique to softball — make it a signature shot

24-70mm f/2.8

- Dugout candids and bench moments
- Wide team celebrations after wins
- Senior Day with family on field
- Environment and crowd shots

Softball field positions mirror baseball. The smaller diamond means every shot has better proximity to the action.

PHOTOGRAPHER POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

C — Behind Home Plate

- Best angle for windmill pitch and swing
- Catcher in full gear adds visual depth
- Home plate collisions and stolen base
- Shoot from elevated through the backstop

A/B — Dugout Sides

- Through the fence for fielding shots
- Stolen base and pick-off attempts
- Slap hit and run play action
- Pitcher-batter profile from 1B side

D/E/F — Outfield Lines

- Diving outfield catches
- Outfield wall plays
- Shoot toward infield — players at you
- Use for long fly balls and tag-ups

Softball checklist mirrors baseball with key additions — the windmill pitch and slap hit are sport-specific priorities.

PITCHING AND HITTING

- ☐ Pitcher at full windmill release point
- ☐ Batter in full swing contact moment
- ☐ Slap hitter mid-run-and-slap motion
- ☐ Catcher framing a pitch in the zone
- ☐ Strikeout reaction — pitcher celebrating

BASE RUNNING

- ☐ Stolen base headfirst or feet-first slide
- ☐ Squeeze play — runner scoring from 3B
- ☐ Tag-up and run from third on a fly ball
- ☐ Rundown — chaos between two bases

PRE-GAME

- ☐ Pitcher warming up windmill in bullpen
- ☐ Team infield warm-up chatter
- ☐ First pitch ceremony or senior recognition

FIELDING

- ☐ Diving stop in the infield
- ☐ Outfielder sprinting under a fly ball
- ☐ Double play turn at second
- ☐ Catcher throwing down to second

DUGOUT AND EMOTION

- ☐ Walk-off hit reaction — teammates pouring out
- ☐ Dugout hype before a big at-bat
- ☐ Tears after a loss or big win
- ☐ Senior Day parent escort on the field

POST-GAME

- ☐ Team celebration at home plate
- ☐ Handshake line sportsmanship shot
- ☐ Coach with team in the post-game huddle
- ☐ Trophy or plaque at championship

Capture the Windmill

- The underhand windmill pitch is unique to softball — make it a signature shot
- Start burst at the beginning of the arm circle, not at release
- Ball-at-hip-release is the defining moment — everything else is buildup
- Pitcher face during delivery captures intense focus — shoot tight

Work the Smaller Diamond

- You are physically closer to everything — use 70-200mm instead of 300-400mm
- Proximity lets you capture facial expressions clearly during plays
- Infield conversations and signs are more visible — great candid
- Get low for ground-level shots — the smaller field makes this accessible

The Slap Hit

- Watch for lefties in the batting order — most slap hitters are left-handed
- Slap hitters start running during their swing — freeze run-and-contact
- Best angle: from behind the third base line facing toward first base
- The infield scramble after a slap is chaotic — burst through the whole play

Read the Score and Situation

- Late innings, close game = highest emotional shots
- Runner on third with less than two outs — be at home plate for the score
- Tie game in the last inning — position for the walk-off celebration
- Know the seniors on each team — their expressions matter most

Dugout Storytelling

- Softball dugouts are often accessible — ask before entering
- Between innings: quiet moments, prep rituals, and encouragement
- The look on a pitcher face walking back after a rough inning
- Walk-off reactions from the dugout are explosive — be ready in position

Yearbook Needs

- Every pitcher needs a windmill shot — it is the signature softball image
- Catcher in full gear is a visually powerful portrait — get it early
- Dive shots make any page — even practice dive drills are usable
- The walk-off celebration should lead your sports section

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

DAY GAME

1/1000-1600s • f/4-5.6 • ISO 100-400 • Continuous AF • Burst

EVENING / LIGHTS

1/800s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Auto WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Windmill pitch at ball-release — the defining softball shot
2. Batter in full swing — bat and ball contact frozen
3. Headfirst dive back to first on a pickoff
4. Outfielder diving horizontal for a catch
5. Walk-off celebration — teammates storming home plate
6. Slap hitter mid-run-and-contact
7. Catcher in full gear framing a pitch
8. Dugout eruption after a big play
9. Senior Day on the field with family
10. Post-game — emotion after the final out



Soccer

Photography Guide

Soccer demands endurance from photographers as much as players. 90 minutes of continuous movement means you must stay focused, anticipate runs, and position early to capture the decisive moment.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Day & evening light exposure guide

02

Field Position Map

6 positions for full coverage

03

Shot Checklist

The shots every soccer spread needs

04

Pro Tips

Anticipation and reading the game

Soccer is usually played outdoors in good light. The challenge is the large field — a long lens is essential to reach the action. Keep your shutter fast enough to freeze footwork. Soccer balls move at 40-70 mph — 1/1000s minimum for clean ball freeze.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Outdoor Day (Natural Light)

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/1600s
Aperture	f/4 – f/5.6
ISO	200 – 800
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight / Auto
Metering	Evaluative

Evening / Floodlight Game

Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Tungsten / 4000K
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

300-400mm f/4

- Reach across the full field
- Compress players for dramatic depth
- Best for goal-mouth and midfield action
- Monopod strongly recommended

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best for close action near the goal
- Works well for corner kicks & throw-ins
- Good for evening games when light is low
- Versatile — carry as a second body

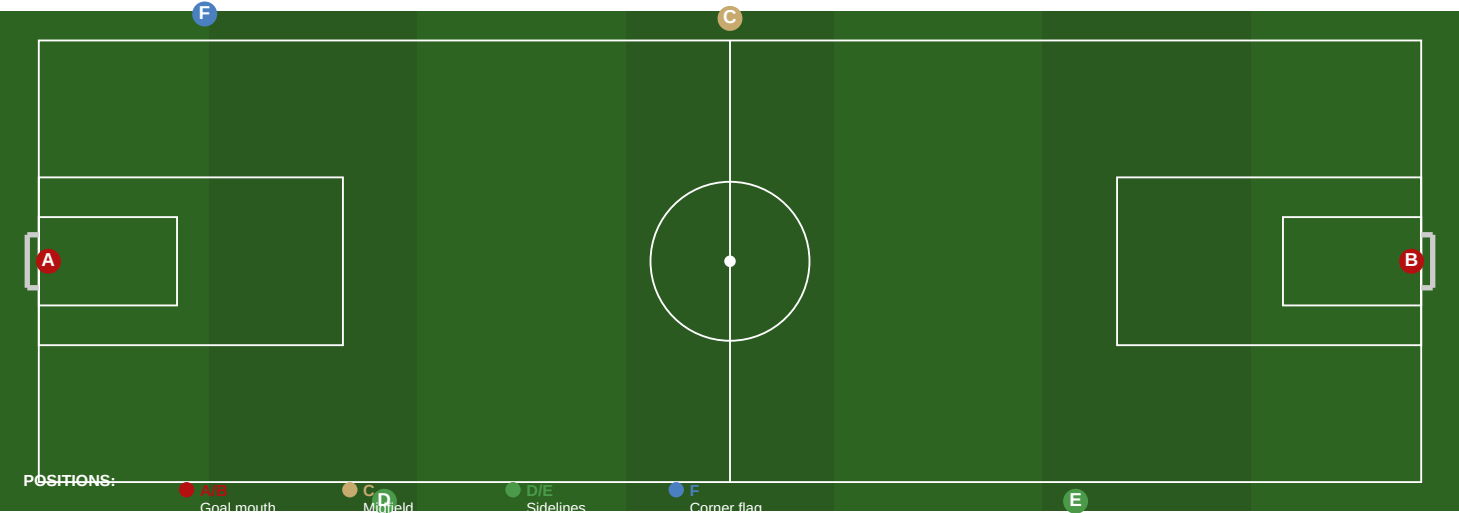
24-70mm f/2.8

- Team celebrations after a goal
- Bench and coach coverage
- Wide environment and crowd shots
- Pre-game and post-game moments



Position near whichever goal is under attack. When play switches ends, stay put and use your long lens until you can reposition.

PHOTOGRAPHER POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

A/B — Goal Mouth

- Position low behind the goal net
- Shoot through the net for framing effect
- Best for: shots on goal, saves, headers
- Switch ends at halftime or when play shifts

C — Midfield Elevated

- Press box or elevated sideline position
- Full field view — great for transition play
- Long lens compresses attacking runs
- Best for showing team shape and formations

D/E — Sidelines

- Quarter and three-quarter field sidelines
- Best for: build-up play and dribbling
- Shoot toward the far goal for context
- Good for 1v1 duels and midfield tackles

F — Corner Flag Position:

Stand near the corner flag for corner kicks and wide free kicks — headers at the near post and crosses into the box are excellent from here.

Soccer has no natural stoppages — stay alert for 90 minutes. Position early for set pieces — they produce the best shots.

PRE-GAME

- ☐ Players in warm-up drills on the pitch
- ☐ Goalkeeper warm-up facing shots
- ☐ Captains at center circle for coin toss
- ☐ Team huddle before kickoff

ATTACKING PLAY

- ☐ Shot on goal — foot-to-ball contact
- ☐ Header in the penalty area
- ☐ Goal celebration — scorer and teammates
- ☐ Dribbling past a defender 1v1
- ☐ Cross into the box from the flank

SET PIECES

- ☐ Corner kick — ball leaving the foot
- ☐ Free kick wall and shooter simultaneously
- ☐ Penalty kick — shooter and goalkeeper
- ☐ Throw-in from the sideline — context

DEFENDING

- ☐ Goalkeeper diving full extension save
- ☐ Sliding tackle — cleats up in the air
- ☐ Defensive header clearing the ball
- ☐ Goal-line clearance — last-second save
- ☐ Goalkeeper punching a cross

SIDELINE & EMOTION

- ☐ Coach pacing the technical area
- ☐ Substitution — player coming on
- ☐ Player doubled over from exhaustion
- ☐ Bench reaction to a near-miss

POST-GAME

- ☐ Goal scorer mobbed by teammates
- ☐ Team forming celebration pile
- ☐ Dejected defender after a loss
- ☐ Handshake line with opponents

Follow the Ball, Not the Player

- Eyes on the ball at all times — players move off ball constantly
- Predict where the ball is going, not where it is
- Ball over the top to a running forward = sprint to the goal line
- Track the ball into the box early — be positioned before it arrives

Freeze the Decisive Moment

- Foot-to-ball contact happens in under 1/500th of a second
- Pre-focus on the penalty spot during free kicks near the box
- Headers: freeze at the point of forehead contact — not before or after
- Goalkeeper saves: start burst when the shot is taken, not when the keeper dives

Position Before the Set Piece

- Corner kicks are predictable — move early, not when the kick is being taken
- Free kick near the box: position between kicker and near post
- Penalty kicks: shoot from the side to capture both shooter and goalkeeper
- Throw-ins near the attacking third are often overlooked — but good transition shots

Capture the Full Field Story

- Wide shots that show the shape and scale of the game are yearbook gold
- An outnumbered defender facing three attackers tells the whole story in one frame
- Goalkeeper organising the defense is a leadership moment worth capturing
- The empty space and a lone player sprinting into it is a beautiful shot

Long Game Endurance

- Carry a monopod — 90 minutes with a 400mm is exhausting
- Review and delete bad frames at halftime to make room on your card
- Swap positions at halftime — don't spend the full game on one side
- Your best shots often come in the final 10 minutes when everyone is tired and desperate

Yearbook Priorities

- Every goalkeeper needs a dramatic save or distribution shot
- The goal celebration is the must-have shot — be in position at all times
- Slide tackles look great in print — worth chasing all game
- Get jersey numbers clearly for captions — especially goalscorers

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

OUTDOOR DAY

1/1000-1600s • f/4-5.6 • ISO 200-800 • Continuous AF • Burst

EVENING GAME

1/800-1000s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Tungsten WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Shot on goal — foot-to-ball contact frozen
2. Goalkeeper diving full-extension save
3. Header in the penalty box — forehead to ball
4. Sliding tackle — studs visible, ball contact
5. Goal celebration — scorer mobbed by teammates
6. Corner kick — ball leaving the foot
7. 1v1 dribble — player past the defender
8. Coach reaction — pacing the technical area
9. Goalkeeper organizing the defense — leadership moment
10. Post-game — emotional final whistle reaction

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TrailMark Yearbooks

Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Volleyball

Photography Guide

Volleyball is vertical — every key moment happens above the net.

Master the timing of the attack swing, the reach of the block, and the drama of a dig to cover this sport completely.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Indoor gymnasium light guide

02

Court Position Map

Where to stand for the spike & block

03

Shot Checklist

Every set, every kill, every dive

04

Pro Tips

Timing jumps and reading the setter

Volleyball is an indoor sport — gym lighting applies. The key challenge is freezing vertical motion at peak height above the net. Your shutter must be fast enough to freeze a hand at full extension. Test in warmups — arms moving at full speed reveal any motion blur.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Standard Gym (Fluorescent)	
Shutter Speed	1/640s – 1/800s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Fluorescent / Auto
Metering	Center-Weighted

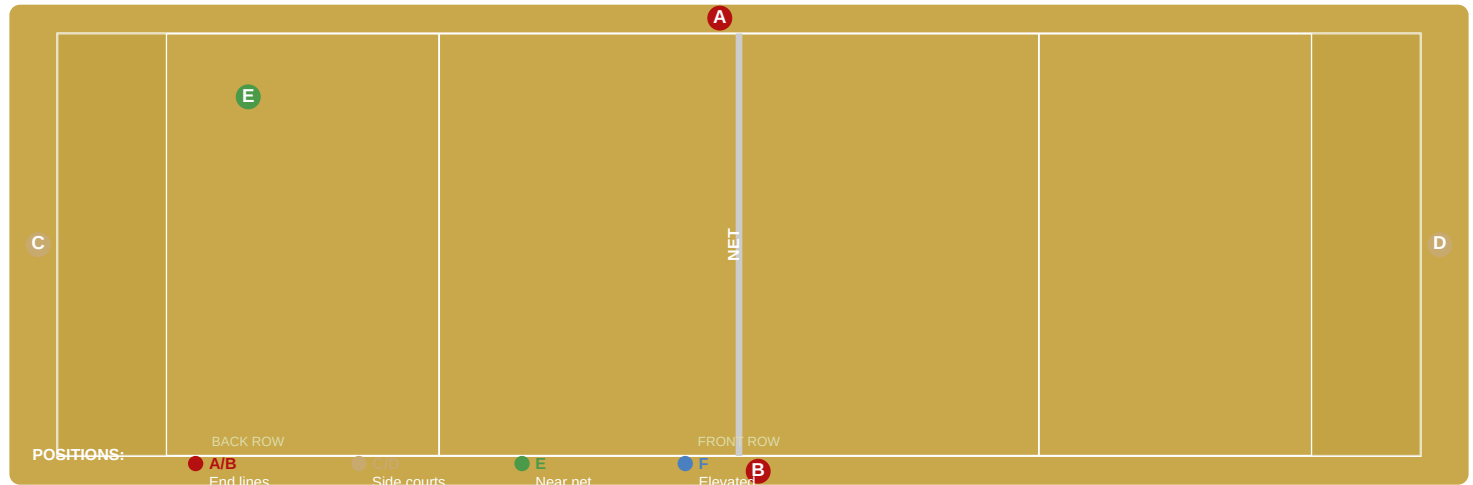
Well-Lit / LED Gym	
Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	800 – 1600
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Auto / 4000K
Metering	Evaluative

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8	85mm or 135mm f/1.8	35-50mm f/1.8
- Best all-around volleyball lens - Reach from end line to near net - Fast enough for indoor gym lighting - Works for both spike and dig shots	- Maximum light in dark gyms - Tight on a single player at the net - Shallow depth isolates the attacker - Best for player portrait moments	- Full team celebration after a point - Wide court atmosphere shots - Bench and coach during time-outs - Pre-game and warm-up coverage

Volleyball photographers must stay tight to the end lines. Never cross onto the court — move around the perimeter only.

PHOTOGRAPHER POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

A/B — End Lines

- Primary volleyball position — end line
- Shoot toward the net — attacks coming at you
- Best for: kills, blocks, digs behind the attack line
- Switch ends between sets if needed

C/D — Side Courts

- Shoot from outside the sideline
- Profile view of attacks and blocks
- Best for: setter sequences and back-row attacks
- Good for showing both teams simultaneously

E — Near Net

- Get low near the net post for spike shots
- Net-level angle is dramatic for blocks
- Keep clear of players — tight to the post only
- Best frame: ball, attacker hand, blocker hand

F — Elevated / Balcony Position:

If your gym has a balcony or elevated running track, shoot from above for overhead court shots and full team formations.

Volleyball plays are fast but rhythmic — each rally follows a pattern. Learn the pattern and your timing improves every set.

PRE-GAME

- ☐ Team in warm-up passing lines
- ☐ Setter and hitter running approach drills
- ☐ Libero in passing warm-up stance
- ☐ Team huddle before the first serve

ATTACK

- ☐ Outside hitter at peak of jump — arm cocked
- ☐ Ball contact at full arm extension above net
- ☐ Back-row attack from behind the 10-foot line
- ☐ Tip or roll shot — deceptive, hand open

SERVING

- ☐ Server at full arm swing on jump serve
- ☐ Float serve — ball leaving the hand
- ☐ Ace reaction — server and teammates
- ☐ Serving error — head-down reaction

DEFENSE

- ☐ Block — two hands above the net simultaneously
- ☐ Libero pass — platform arms extended
- ☐ Diving dig — player horizontal mid-air
- ☐ Pancake save — hand flat on the floor

BENCH & EMOTION

- ☐ Bench eruption after a kill or block
- ☐ Timeout huddle with coaches drawing plays
- ☐ Player consoling teammate after an error
- ☐ Libero high-fiving after a great pass

POST-GAME

- ☐ Team celebration after match point
- ☐ Players embracing after a tough loss
- ☐ Senior Night with parents on the court
- ☐ Trophy at championship or tournament

Read the Setter

- The setter determines where the attack comes — watch them, not the ball
- Quick sets go to the middle — position toward the middle blocker
- Outside sets give you time to move to the end line
- Back sets are less common — but tell the story of deception

Time the Jump

- Attackers start their approach 3 steps before the ball arrives
- Begin your burst when the hitter plants their left foot for the last step
- Peak of the jump — arm fully cocked — is the maximum drama moment
- Ball-hand contact happens faster than the eye can track — only burst catches it

The Block is Half the Story

- A blocked ball is one of the most dramatic volleyball shots
- Position so the blocker and attacker are both in the frame
- Two blockers with hands completely above the net is a powerful image
- Ball deflecting off the block is chaos — and great visual content

Work the Libero

- The libero is the most athletic defensive player on the court
- Diving digs and diving saves are some of the best volleyball images
- The libero's platform arms at full extension is a technically perfect shot
- Position at the end line facing toward the net to capture their digs

Anticipate the Celebration

- Volleyball celebrates every single point — be ready for every one
- Fist pump after a kill, team gathering after a point — all yearbook gold
- End-of-set celebrations are more extended — stay on the team after the final point
- Bench reactions are often wilder than on-court — keep an eye on both

Yearbook Needs

- Every starting position needs at least one great action shot
- The spike is the iconic volleyball image — make sure it appears
- Libero dive is a close second — technically beautiful and dynamic
- Senior Night ceremony is essential — every senior with their family on the court

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

STANDARD GYM

1/640-800s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Continuous AF • Burst

LED GYM

1/800-1000s • f/2.8 • ISO 800-1600 • Auto WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Outside hitter at peak jump — arm fully extended above net

2. Block — two hands up, ball visible deflecting

3. Libero diving dig — player horizontal above the floor

4. Back-row attack — jump from behind the 10-foot line

5. Set point celebration — team pile on the court

6. Setter pushing a quick set to the middle

7. Serve — ball leaving the hand at full arm extension

8. Pancake save — hand flat on the floor under the ball

9. Bench eruption after a kill or ace

10. Senior Night — every senior with their family on the court

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TrailMark Yearbooks

Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Wrestling

Photography Guide

Wrestling is intimate, intense, and full of raw expression. You're close to every match — use that proximity to capture the struggle, the technique, and the emotion of every bout.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Gym lighting & floor-level guide

02

Mat Position Map

6 positions around the circle

03

Shot Checklist

Takedowns, pins, and emotion

04

Pro Tips

Floor-level shooting & anticipation

Wrestling is shot indoors under gym lighting at close range. You can get lower to the mat than almost any other sport. Shoot from floor level whenever possible — it gives wrestling photography its distinctive, powerful look.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Standard Gym Lighting

Shutter Speed	1/500s – 1/640s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Fluorescent / Auto
Metering	Center-Weighted

Well-Lit / LED Facility

Shutter Speed	1/640s – 1/800s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	800 – 1600
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Auto / 4000K
Metering	Evaluative

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

85mm f/1.4 or f/1.8

- Best for floor-level shooting
- Fast enough for dim gym lighting
- Shallow depth isolates the wrestlers
- Portrait distance from mat edge

70-200mm f/2.8

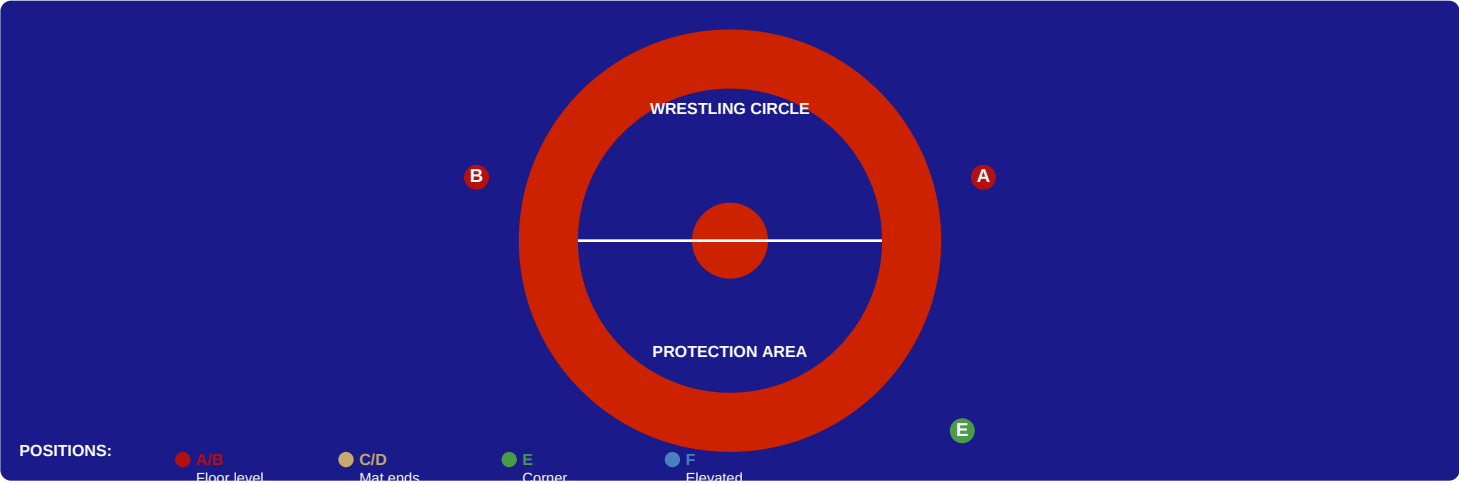
- Shoot from bleachers or stands
- Covers multiple mats simultaneously
- Good reach for far side of the mat
- Versatile for dual and tournament meets

35-50mm f/1.8

- Ultra-close floor-level work
- Environmental storytelling wide
- Pre-match and post-match emotion
- Weigh-in and warm-up coverage

Get as close to mat level as allowed. The lower your camera, the more powerful the wrestling image. Lie flat on the floor when possible.

PHOTOGRAPHER POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

A/B — Floor Level Sides

- Lie on your stomach at mat edge
- Camera at mat level or just above
- Best for: takedowns, near-falls, pins
- Switch sides when the action moves

C/D — Mat Ends

- Position at either end of the mat
- Wrestlers often drive toward the ends
- Head-on angle for neutral position
- Captures facial expression and intensity

E — Corner Position

- Corner gives diagonal perspective
- Both wrestlers visible in one frame
- Good for escape and reversal shots
- Less blocked by referee than side angles

Wrestling matches move fast and end suddenly. Know the scoring situations so you're in position for takedowns and near-falls.

PRE-MATCH

- ☐ Weigh-in ceremony or team check-in
- ☐ Wrestler warming up solo on the mat
- ☐ Pre-match handshake at center circle
- ☐ Coach giving last-minute instructions

NEUTRAL POSITION

- ☐ Tie-up at center — hand fighting
- ☐ Penetration step on a takedown attempt
- ☐ Double-leg takedown at the moment of contact
- ☐ Single-leg lift — wrestler elevated off mat

REFEREE POSITION

- ☐ Escape — bottom wrestler breaking free
- ☐ Reversal — full turn to gain top position
- ☐ Breakdown — top wrestler controlling opponent

NEAR-FALL & PIN

- ☐ Near-fall — both shoulders nearly touching
- ☐ Pin — referee hand slapping the mat
- ☐ Wrestler's face during a near-fall hold
- ☐ The exact moment of the pin decision

EMOTION

- ☐ Arm raised by referee after the win
- ☐ Wrestler dropping to the mat after a loss
- ☐ Coach and wrestler embrace post-match
- ☐ Opponent helping wrestler up — sportsmanship

TOURNAMENT

- ☐ Bracket sheet with a wrestler's name advancing
- ☐ Team score board during a close dual
- ☐ Championship match final period intensity
- ☐ Podium or medal ceremony if available

Get to the Floor

- The single biggest improvement: get your camera to mat level
- Lie flat on your stomach at the mat edge for the most powerful angle
- A shot from standing height makes wrestling look small and flat
- Mat-level images make the viewer feel like they're in the match

Know the Scoring

- Takedown (2 pts): the most dynamic moment — be ready for the penetration step
- Near-fall (2-3 pts): both shoulders down — position to capture the hold
- Escape (1 pt): bottom wrestler bursting free — shoot the explosive movement
- Reversal: both wrestlers rotating — burst through the entire turn

Read the Stance

- Wrestlers in a crouch signal an imminent shot — get your burst ready
- A wrestler backing to the edge often gets driven out — be at that edge
- High-crotch lifts are brief — only burst catches the elevation
- Head position tells the story — shoot faces whenever possible

Tournament Coverage

- Tournaments have multiple mats — assign one photographer per mat
- Between matches: document the bracket board and team score updates
- Rest periods are for repositioning — always move during stoppages
- The tournament final is the hero match — give it your full attention

The Referee is Your Enemy

- Referees move constantly and will block your shot — be patient
- Positioning behind the referee rather than beside them reduces blocking
- Communicate with the official before the match — many will adjust
- Use a longer focal length from further back to shoot over the referee

Yearbook Needs

- Every weight class should have at least one competition shot
- The arm raise after a win is the signature wrestling moment
- Floor-level face shots during a near-fall are the most compelling
- Team dual atmosphere — wide shot of all mats going simultaneously

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

STANDARD GYM

1/500-640s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Continuous AF • Burst

LED FACILITY

1/640-800s • f/2.8 • ISO 800-1600 • Auto WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Takedown — penetration step and initial contact
2. Pin — referee hand hitting the mat
3. Near-fall — both shoulders nearly touching the mat
4. Arm raise — referee lifting the winner's hand
5. Escape — bottom wrestler explosively breaking free
6. Double-leg lift — opponent elevated off the mat
7. Face during a near-fall hold — intensity and struggle
8. Coach and wrestler pre-match instructions
9. Post-match embrace — win or loss, pure emotion
10. Tournament bracket board with team advancing

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TrailMark Yearbooks

Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Swimming & Diving

Photography Guide

Swimming and diving reward photographers with unique angles — underwater shots, mid-air dives, and the explosive start. Anticipate each event and position early for the decisive moment.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Pool lighting & splash guide

02

Pool Position Map

Best spots for every event

03

Shot Checklist

Starts, strokes, turns & dives

04

Pro Tips

Timing the turn & capturing dives

Indoor pools are notoriously difficult to shoot — overhead fluorescent or sodium vapor lights reflect harshly off the water. Use a fast shutter to freeze water spray. A polarizing filter can reduce glare but costs 1-2 stops of light — test before the meet.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Indoor Pool (Fluorescent/Sodium)

Shutter Speed	1/640s – 1/800s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Manual / 3200K
Metering	Center-Weighted

Outdoor / Well-Lit Pool

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/2000s
Aperture	f/4 – f/5.6
ISO	200 – 800
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight / Auto
Metering	Evaluative

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best all-around pool lens
- Reach from pool deck to far lane
- Works for both swimming and diving
- Good for finish-touch and start shots

16-35mm f/2.8 (Wide)

- Dramatic underwater-style angles
- Start block close-up and wide
- Diving sequence from pool deck
- Environmental pool atmosphere shots

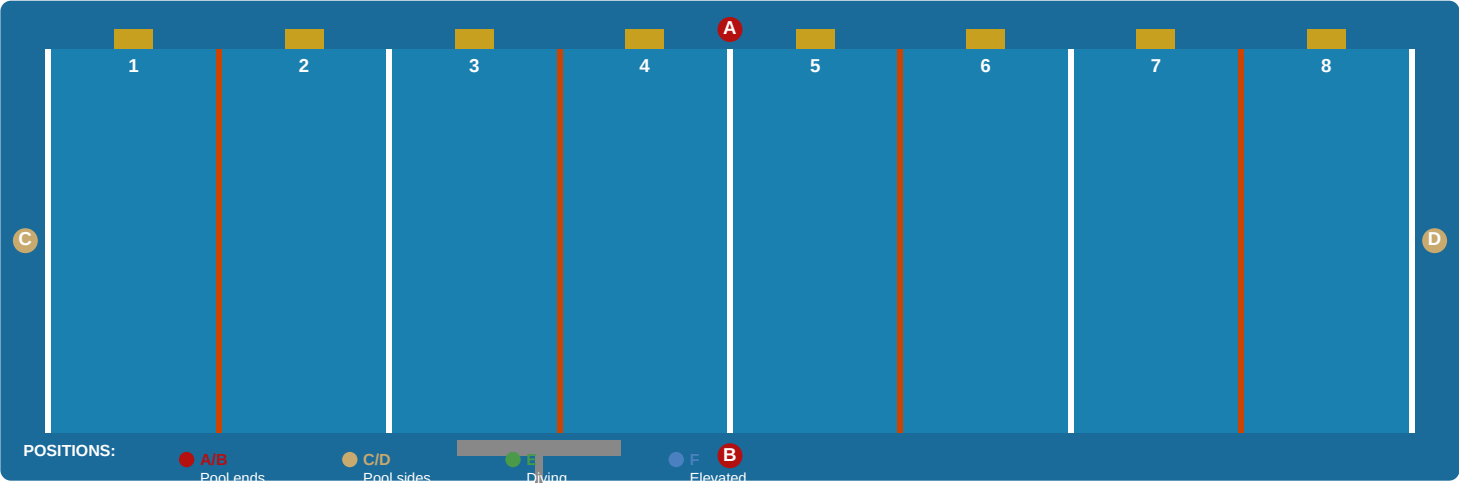
300mm+ f/4

- Reach individual lanes mid-pool
- Compress laps for dramatic effect
- Touch finish from the far end
- Best for outdoor pools with space



Pool photography requires advance positioning — you cannot move once swimmers are in the water. Plan each event before it begins.

PHOTOGRAPHER POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

A — Starting End

- Best position for the race start dive
- Shoot along the starting block line
- Touch finish captures and lane celebration
- Get low to pool level for splash shots

C/D — Pool Sides

- Mid-pool side is great for stroke form
- Capture butterfly out-of-water arm swing
- Freestyle breathing moments from this angle
- Get as low to the water surface as possible

E — Diving Area

- Position at 90 degrees to the board
- Capture the full arc of the dive
- Get the entry into the water — clean or splashing
- Shoot the standing pose on the board too

F — Elevated / Bleacher Position:
Shoot from the bleachers above the pool for overhead lane shots, relay exchanges, and full team atmosphere images.

Swimming events are fast and linear. Know the event order so you can be in position before each race starts.

PRE-MEET

- ☐ Swimmers at starting blocks — race ready
- ☐ Team huddle before events begin
- ☐ Swimmer in warm-up lane doing drills
- ☐ Coach giving race strategy instructions

SWIMMING

- ☐ Start dive — body fully extended above water
- ☐ Butterfly — both arms out of water at peak
- ☐ Backstroke — face up, arms windmilling
- ☐ Freestyle — breathing moment, arm extended
- ☐ Touch finish — hand on wall, gasp for air

RELAY

- ☐ Relay exchange — outgoing swimmer in the air
- ☐ Anchor leg finish — team reacting at wall
- ☐ Team celebration after a relay win

DIVING

- ☐ Approach walk and hurdle on the board
- ☐ Peak of the jump — body fully extended
- ☐ Tuck or pike at maximum height
- ☐ Entry — clean vertical or dramatic splash
- ☐ Score reveal reaction from the diver

EMOTION

- ☐ Swimmer looking at the scoreboard for their time
- ☐ PR or record-breaking reaction at the wall
- ☐ Coach congratulating swimmer after a race
- ☐ Team piling on after a close relay win

POST-MEET

- ☐ Podium or awards for top finishers
- ☐ Team photo on the pool deck
- ☐ Coach addressing the team poolside

Shoot the Start

- The starting dive is the most photogenic moment in swimming
- Position at pool level looking along the block line toward the water
- Start burst when the starter says "take your marks" — not at the beep
- The moment of maximum extension above the water is the hero frame

Freeze the Butterfly

- Butterfly is the most visually dramatic stroke — prioritize it
- Arms at full extension above the water surface is the key moment
- 1/800s minimum to freeze the arm spray clearly
- Position at pool deck level — shooting slightly upward is most dramatic

Time the Flip Turn

- Pre-focus on the wall 1-2 feet away from it
- Flip turns happen in under half a second — burst through the approach
- The feet on the wall after the flip is a technically beautiful shot
- Open turns in breaststroke and butterfly offer more time to react

Diving Sequence

- Position at 90 degrees to the diving board — not straight on
- The four moments: approach, jump, rotation/position, entry
- Burst through the entire dive — the best frame is often mid-rotation
- Entry into water is dramatic — clean entry is beautiful, big splash is exciting

Deal with Pool Glare

- Arrive early and test your white balance under the actual pool lights
- Shoot slightly downward when possible to reduce direct water reflection
- Polarizing filter helps with glare but requires higher ISO — test first
- RAW files let you fix white balance and recover overexposed glare areas

Yearbook Needs

- Every event should have at least one representative shot
- Relay teams need a photo together — they're a team within the team
- Diving coverage is often neglected — give it dedicated attention
- The scoreboard moment after a record or PR is a signature swimming shot

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

INDOOR POOL

1/640-800s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Manual WB 3200K • Burst

OUTDOOR POOL

1/1000-2000s • f/4-5.6 • ISO 200-800 • Daylight WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Start dive — full body extension above the water

2. Butterfly — both arms at peak extension out of water

3. Relay exchange — outgoing swimmer airborne off the block

4. Touch finish — hand on wall, gasping expression

5. Flip turn — feet on the wall at maximum compression

6. Diving entry — clean vertical or dramatic splash

7. Diving peak — maximum height in the air mid-rotation

8. PR reaction — swimmer reading scoreboard

9. Relay team celebration at the wall

10. Coach congratulating swimmer — poolside emotion

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TrailMark Yearbooks

Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Track & Field

Photography Guide

Track & Field is dozens of stories happening simultaneously. Work the finish line for sprints, the infield for jumps, and learn to be in two places at once with a long lens.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Outdoor & overcast light guide

02

Track & Field Map

6 positions for full coverage

03

Shot Checklist

Sprints, jumps, throws & more

04

Pro Tips

Managing multiple events at once

Track & Field is almost always outdoors in natural light — one of the easier sports to expose. Overcast days are ideal. The challenge is the scale of coverage — you're managing 15+ events. Plan your event schedule and move between events strategically.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Sunny Outdoor Conditions

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/2000s
Aperture	f/4 – f/5.6
ISO	100 – 400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight
Metering	Evaluative

Overcast / Afternoon Light

Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/2.8 – f/4
ISO	400 – 800
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Cloudy / Auto
Metering	Evaluative

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

300-400mm f/4-5.6

- Reach across the full track
- Compress runners in a group
- Best for mid-race passing shots
- Essential for far-side coverage

70-200mm f/2.8

- Versatile for most positions
- Great for finish line shots
- Works for infield events
- Best in overcast / lower light

Wide 16-35mm

- Start line crowd and environment
- Relay handoff close-up chaos
- Celebration after a win
- Team huddle and atmosphere

Track meets have events happening simultaneously across the entire venue. Know the schedule and move between positions proactively. Print the heat sheet before the meet and highlight your priority events. You cannot cover everything — plan your shots in advance.

Start / Finish Line

Position just outside the track at the start/finish line. Sprint starts are the most explosive moment in track photography — get in burst mode before the starter says "set." The finish line gives you the lean at the tape for close races and the relay baton exchange for the 4x100. Keep the timing clock visible in the background when possible.

Back Straight & Turns

The back straight (opposite side of the stadium) is ideal for distance races — runners spread out and the packing is visible. Shoot from outside the track using a 300-400mm lens to compress the runners. The turns are excellent for showing lean and effort during the 200m and 400m. Position at the top or bottom of a turn looking inward.

Infield — Jumping Events

For long jump and triple jump: position at 90 degrees to the runway and shoot the takeoff — foot at the edge of the board is the key moment. For high jump: set up at a 45-degree angle to the bar so you can see both the athlete and the bar clearing. For pole vault: stand at the landing pit side and shoot the inverted body above the bar.

Infield — Throwing Events

Shot put: position perpendicular to the circle to capture the release — ball leaving the hand with the athlete fully extended. Discus: same angle but further back for safety. Hammer: stay well outside the safety cage perimeter — never enter until the implement has landed. Javelin: shoot from the side showing the full run-up and release arm.

Relay Coverage

The 4x100 exchange zone is the most chaotic and exciting relay moment — position at the exchange zone for baton handoffs. For the 4x400, the start of each leg and the anchor finishing sprint are the best shots. Get the full team celebrating together after the race — relay teams are their own unit within the team.

Field Event Strategy

Field events run alongside track events — identify which events overlap and prioritize. Walk the infield before the meet to identify clear angles and check with officials about allowed positions. Move during race lulls, not during active events. A monopod is essential for infield shooting — you will cover a lot of ground.

Track meets have a printed event schedule — use it. Plan where to be for each event at least 15 minutes ahead.

SPRINTS

- ☐ 100m/200m start — explosive from blocks
- ☐ Lean at the finish tape in a close race
- ☐ Full stride mid-race — both feet off ground
- ☐ Relay baton exchange — hands in transition

DISTANCE

- ☐ Pack running together in early laps
- ☐ Leader breaking away mid-race
- ☐ Final kick — exhaustion and determination
- ☐ Finishing lap — clock visible in background

HURDLES

- ☐ Hurdler at peak — lead leg fully extended
- ☐ Trail leg clearing the hurdle frame
- ☐ Runner knocking a hurdle — still dynamic
- ☐ Finish lean after the final hurdle

FIELD EVENTS

- ☐ Long jump takeoff — foot at edge of board
- ☐ High jump bar clearance — body arched
- ☐ Shot put release — ball leaving the hand
- ☐ Pole vault — inverted above the bar
- ☐ Discus full rotation before release

EMOTION

- ☐ New PR reaction — athlete checking time
- ☐ Coach and athlete after a qualifying jump
- ☐ Teammate hugging after a race win
- ☐ Dejection after a disqualification

TEAM

- ☐ Team cheering from the infield for teammates
- ☐ Award ceremony — medals or ribbons
- ☐ Team score board at a pivotal moment
- ☐ Post-meet team photo on the track

Master the Event Schedule

- Download or print the heat sheet before the meet
- Map out your shot priorities by event and time
- The 100m and 4x100 relay produce the best sprint shots — prioritize both
- Don't get locked in one spot — track meets reward photographers who move

The Finish Line

- Position slightly to the side of the finish line — not directly behind it
- Shoot from low angle to capture the lean at the tape
- For close races, burst through the entire final 20 meters
- The clock in the background gives context — include it when possible

Long Jump and Triple Jump

- Position at 90 degrees to the runway — shoot the takeoff, not the flight
- The foot at the edge of the takeoff board is the peak action moment
- Land and reaction shot tells the story of whether it was good or not
- Shoot from low — parallel to the runway surface if allowed

Pole Vault Strategy

- Set up before each athlete attempts — vaulting is predictable
- The inverted body above the bar is the signature pole vault image
- Shoot from the landing pit side for the clearance moment
- The bar falling (or staying up) is the result moment — stay on it

Work the Infield

- The infield is busy — communicate with officials before entering
- Field events have natural pauses between attempts — reposition then
- Shot put circle and discus cage restrict where you can safely stand
- Javelin has a very specific restricted zone — respect all boundaries

Yearbook Coverage Goals

- Every event should appear — even less glamorous ones like the 3200m
- Get an individual shot of every athlete who qualifies or breaks a record
- Relay teams are a subgroup within the team — they deserve their own shot
- Overcast days are your friend — soft even light everywhere on the track

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

SUNNY

1/1000-2000s • f/4-5.6 • ISO 100-400 • Continuous AF • Burst

OVERCAST

1/800-1000s • f/2.8-4 • ISO 400-800 • Cloudy WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Sprint start — explosive out of the blocks
2. Finish line lean — chest breaking the tape
3. Long jump takeoff — foot at the edge of the board
4. Pole vault clearance — body inverted above the bar
5. 4x100 relay baton exchange — hands in transition
6. Shot put release — ball leaving the hand
7. Distance pack mid-race — runners grouped together
8. PR reaction — athlete seeing their time on the clock
9. Hurdle clearance — lead leg fully extended over the bar
10. Relay team celebration — full team together after the race

TM

TrailMark Yearbooks

Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Cross Country

Photography Guide

Cross country is a race against the clock, the course, and yourself. The photographer's challenge: cover a 3-mile course and capture the story of every runner from start to finish.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Outdoor & variable weather guide

02

Course Position Map

Where to stand along the route

03

Shot Checklist

Start, course, finish & emotion

04

Pro Tips

Scouting the course before the race

Cross country is fully outdoor — light varies widely based on time of day, weather, and course terrain (open fields vs. shaded woods). Scout the course before the race. Wooded sections may require boosted ISO. Open meadow sections are often beautifully lit.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Open Fields (Sunny)

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/1600s
Aperture	f/4 – f/5.6
ISO	100 – 400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight
Metering	Evaluative

Wooded / Shaded Sections

Shutter Speed	1/640s – 1/800s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	800 – 1600
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Shade / Auto
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best all-around cross country lens
- Works in both light and dark sections
- Good for start, course, and finish
- Carry on a strap for course running

300-400mm f/4

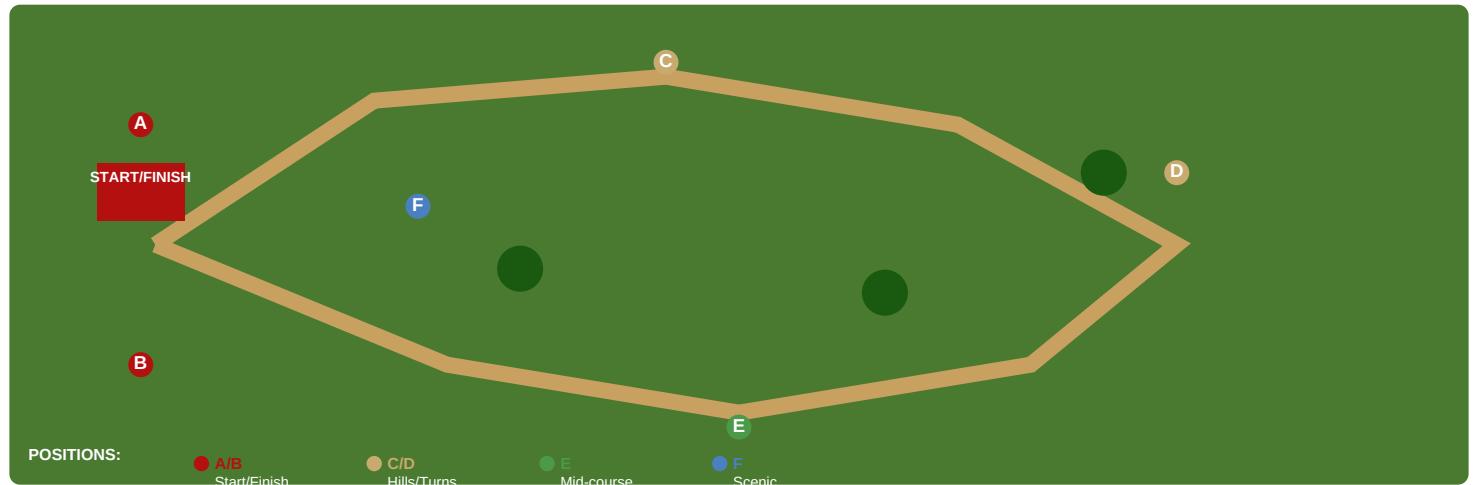
- Compress large packs of runners
- Reach across open meadow sections
- Great for hillside panoramic shots
- Use monopod when covering finish line

35-50mm f/1.8

- Dark wooded section coverage
- Environmental story shots
- Finish chute from inside looking out
- Dramatic wide team celebration shots

Walk the course before the race. Identify the most scenic and dramatic spots — hills, turns, and wooded areas produce the best images.

COURSE POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

A — The Start

- Mass start is the most chaotic and exciting
- Wide lens to capture the full pack exploding
- Zoom in on your school's runners in the crowd

B — The Finish Chute

- The finish is the most emotional moment
- Get inside the chute if allowed by officials
- Facial expressions crossing the finish line

C — Top of a Hill

- Runners cresting a hill show pure effort
- Silhouette shots against the sky are stunning
- Shoot from slightly below looking up at them

D — Course Turn | E — Mid-Course | F — Wooded Section

D: Position at a sharp turn on the course — shoot runners leaning into the bend as the pack rounds it.

E: Mid-course position shows the race developing and the pack spreading out over the first mile.

F: Wooded or shaded sections produce dramatic light and environment shots — great for feature spreads.

You can't be everywhere at once. Choose 3-4 positions and move between them strategically. The start and finish are non-negotiable.

PRE-RACE

- ☐ Team warming up together on the course
- ☐ Runners at the starting line — nervous energy
- ☐ Coach final instructions to the team
- ☐ Starting gun or horn — the anticipation moment

THE START

- ☐ Mass start explosion — full wide shot
- ☐ Your school's runners in the pack mid-crowd
- ☐ First 100 meters — pack still tight together
- ☐ Lead runner establishing early position

ON COURSE

- ☐ Runners cresting a hill — silhouetted sky
- ☐ Pack spreading out mid-race
- ☐ Individual runner alone — solitude and effort
- ☐ Muddy or weather-challenged conditions

THE FINISH

- ☐ First finisher crossing the line
- ☐ Your school's top runners finishing
- ☐ Exhausted collapse after crossing
- ☐ Clock showing the finishing time
- ☐ Teammate reaching out to support a finisher

EMOTION

- ☐ PR reaction — disbelief or joy
- ☐ Runners supporting each other in distress
- ☐ Coach and runner at the finish
- ☐ Team gathering after every runner finishes

TEAM

- ☐ Team score announcement reaction
- ☐ Placing ribbons or medals ceremony
- ☐ Team photo after the meet
- ☐ Rival teams if applicable at invitational

Scout the Course First

- Walk or run the course 30 minutes before the race
- Identify: the most scenic spot, the hardest hill, the narrowest section
- Mark on your phone where you'll position at each course point
- Sunlight direction matters — position so the light hits runners' faces

The Compression Effect

- A long lens compresses the pack of runners dramatically
- From a hillside above, 300mm makes 50 runners look like a dense crowd
- This is the signature cross country image — compressed runners in motion
- Position on high ground overlooking a section of the course

Chase the Course

- After the start, run to your second position before runners arrive
- A photographer who runs can cover 4-5 positions in a 20-minute race
- Plan your route between positions to avoid crossing the course
- Lightweight camera bag and good shoes are essential for course chasing

The Hill is Your Friend

- Hills reveal character — faces of effort, pain, and determination
- Position at the base of a hill and shoot upward as runners crest it
- Runners leaning into a hill with the sky behind them is a powerful composition
- The steeper the hill the better — looks more dramatic in photos

Weather Is Drama

- Mud, rain, fog, and cold make cross country photos extraordinary
- Overcast days with mist on the course are visually stunning
- Muddy legs and shoes tell the story of the course conditions
- Don't put your camera away in light rain — protect it and keep shooting

Yearbook Coverage

- Get every varsity runner finishing the race — no exceptions
- The team placing well at a championship is the headline shot
- Individual runner in solo effort mid-course is the feature portrait
- Course environment — trees, hills, fields — establishes a visual sense of place

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

OPEN / SUNNY

1/1000-1600s • f/4-5.6 • ISO 100-400 • Daylight WB • Burst

WOODED / SHADED

1/640-800s • f/2.8 • ISO 800-1600 • Shade WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Mass start — full wide shot of the pack exploding off the line

2. Runners cresting a hill — silhouetted against the sky

3. Compressed pack mid-race with long lens — runners stacked

4. First finisher crossing the line — expression and clock visible

5. Exhausted collapse just past the finish line

6. Teammate supporting a struggling finisher

7. Solo runner mid-course — loneliness and effort

8. PR reaction — disbelief or pure joy

9. Muddy legs and shoes — the conditions of the course

10. Team gathered after all runners finish — together



Tennis

Photography Guide

Tennis is a one-on-one battle of precision, power, and strategy. Every serve, volley, and return is a moment — and the expressions between points tell the deeper story of the match.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Outdoor hard court & clay guide

02

Court Position Map

Best angles for every shot type

03

Shot Checklist

Serves, groundstrokes & emotion

04

Pro Tips

Working around the fence & noise rules

Tennis is almost always played outdoors. Blue hard courts and clay reflect differently — adjust white balance for each surface. A fast shutter is essential to freeze the racquet at contact. The ball moves at 80-120+ mph — use at least 1/1000s.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Outdoor Hard Court (Sunny)

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/2000s
Aperture	f/4 – f/5.6
ISO	200 – 400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight
Metering	Evaluative

Overcast / Clay Court

Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/2.8 – f/4
ISO	400 – 800
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Cloudy / Auto
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

300-400mm f/4-5.6

- Reach from outside the court fence
- Compress baseline player against the net
- Best for serve and groundstroke shots

70-200mm f/2.8

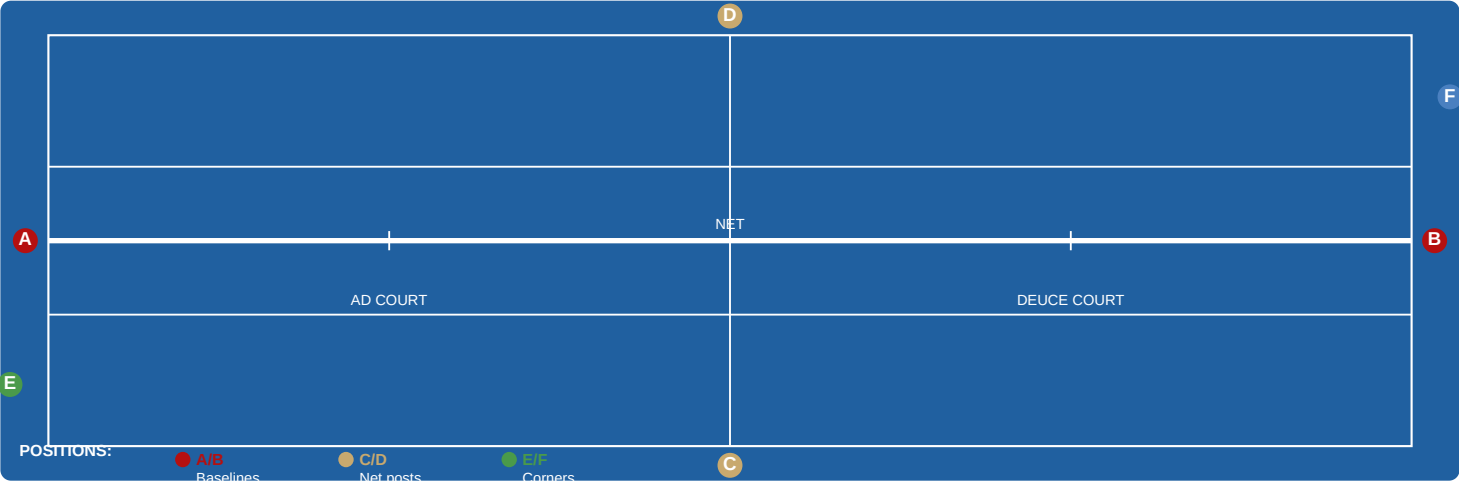
- Versatile for most court positions
- Works when shooting through fence
- Good for net play and volleys
- Best in overcast conditions

85-135mm f/1.8

- Between-point emotion and portrait
- Player toweleling off or bouncing balls
- Celebration after a match point
- Coach / player interaction on changeover

You'll shoot through or over the fence most of the time. Find gaps in the fence or shoot from outside. Never enter the court during play.

COURT POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

A/B — Behind Baselines

- Best angle for serves and groundstrokes
- Shoot through fence gap or over the fence
- Near end: player with court in background

C/D — Net Posts

- Profile view of all baseline shots
- Ball and player contact clearly visible
- Best for showing topspin or slice
- Net posts have gaps — shoot through them

E/F — Corner Positions

- Corner: serve toss clearly visible
- Ball toss above head is a clean shot
- Return of serve from receiver side
- Shows court depth and lines clearly

E — Near Baseline Corner | F — Far Baseline Corner:
E: Near side corner — best for serve toss and ball toss shots. F: Far corner — good for return of serve and showing full court depth.

Tennis is quiet between points — reposition freely during changeovers and between games. Plan your movements during those breaks.

SERVING

- ☐ Ball toss at maximum height above player
- ☐ Racquet at full extension at contact
- ☐ Player's feet leaving ground on jump serve
- ☐ Follow-through after serve completion

GROUNDSTROKES

- ☐ Forehand at full extension — racquet face visible
- ☐ Two-handed backhand contact point
- ☐ Slice backhand — racquet angle at contact
- ☐ Open stance forehand — rotation and weight transfer

NET PLAY

- ☐ Volley punch — racquet and ball in frame
- ☐ Overhead smash — player fully extended up
- ☐ Drop volley — delicate touch close to net
- ☐ Approach shot and net rush sequence

EMOTION & BETWEEN POINTS

- ☐ Fist pump after winning a big point
- ☐ Player talking to themselves — intense focus
- ☐ Toweling off on changeover — character shot
- ☐ Bouncing balls before serve — ritual shot

ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ Court surface with lines and player in background
- ☐ Match scorecard or digital scoreboard
- ☐ Two courts side by side — full team in matches
- ☐ Fan section supporting a player

POST-MATCH

- ☐ Handshake at the net — sportsmanship
- ☐ Winner fist pump at match point
- ☐ Player's expression after a tough loss
- ☐ Coach congratulating the player at courtside

The Fence Is Your Friend

- Chain-link fence creates natural framing when shot through — use it intentionally
- Blurred fence bokeh in the foreground adds depth and context to tennis images
- Find the gap in the fence that gives you the best angle before the match
- Never put your lens barrel through the fence — it signals trespassing

Freeze the Serve

- The ball toss and contact are two separate great shots — pick one and commit
- At ball toss: player looking up, arm extended, ball above racquet is beautiful
- At contact: maximum body rotation, racquet face visible, feet off ground
- Start burst when the player begins their trophy position — not at toss

Read the Bounce Pattern

- Experienced tennis photographers pre-focus where the ball will be hit from
- Watch the returner's position — it tells you where the server will aim
- Deep crosscourt shots happen most often — position on the crosscourt diagonal
- Short angle winners happen less — but they produce the most dynamic body positions

Between-Point Portraits

- Tennis has natural pauses between every single point — use them
- Players bouncing balls, toweling off, or walking are all great character shots
- The expression after losing a key point is one of the most honest in sports
- Changeovers (every 2 games) give you 90 seconds to completely reposition

Multi-Court Coverage

- High school tennis often has 6-9 courts running simultaneously
- Assign yourself to the top singles match — it has the most decisive moments
- Walk the courts once before shooting to identify the best angles
- Doubles teams offer more action in a smaller space — good for crowded tournaments

Yearbook Priorities

- Every singles player needs at least one serve or groundstroke shot
- Doubles partnerships need a team shot — either in action or post-match
- Match point and match celebration are the headline moments
- The handshake at the net is the tennis-specific sportsmanship shot



Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

SUNNY HARD COURT 1/1000-2000s • f/4-5.6 • ISO 200-400 • Daylight WB • Burst

OVERCAST / CLAY 1/800-1000s • f/2.8-4 • ISO 400-800 • Cloudy WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. **Serve contact — racquet face and ball visible at full extension**
2. **Ball toss — player looking up, arm and ball above the head**
3. **Forehand at full extension — topspin rotation clearly visible**
4. Overhead smash — player fully extended above the net
5. Match point fist pump — pure unguarded celebration
6. Volley punch at the net — racquet and ball in the same frame
7. Handshake at the net — post-match sportsmanship
8. Between-point emotion — self-talk or fist pump after a winner
9. Serve ritual — bouncing the ball or toweling off
10. Coach-player moment at a changeover — instruction and support



Golf

Photography Guide

Golf is a sport of silence, precision, and individual character. The challenge: be invisible, be patient, and capture the swing, the reaction, and the story of each hole's drama.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Outdoor sunny & shaded conditions

02

Course Position Guide

Where to stand without disrupting play

03

Shot Checklist

Tee shots, putts & celebrations

04

Pro Tips

Golf etiquette for photographers

Golf is played entirely outdoors in natural light. The main challenges are distance from the action and keeping quiet during shots. Use silent shutter mode if your camera has it. No motor drive sounds during a golf swing — ever. Continuous AF is still appropriate.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Sunny Open Fairway

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/2000s
Aperture	f/4 – f/5.6
ISO	100 – 400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	Silent / Single Shot
White Balance	Daylight
Metering	Evaluative

Shaded / Wooded Holes

Shutter Speed	1/640s – 1/800s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	800 – 1600
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	Silent Shutter
White Balance	Shade / Auto
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

300-400mm f/4

- Stay far back during the swing
- Compress players against the green
- Reach from a safe spectator distance
- Essential for golf photography

70-200mm f/2.8

- Post-swing and putting coverage
- Walking to the next hole candid
- Course environment and scenery
- Best for after the shot is complete

85mm f/1.8

- Player reaction after a great shot
- Reading the putt — focus and expression
- Team celebration at the final hole
- Shallow depth portraits between holes

Golf etiquette is strict. Always stay ahead of the group, never stand in a player's sightline, and use silent shutter during all swings.

Tee Box

Stand to the side and slightly behind the tee markers. Never stand directly behind or in front of the golfer. Capture the full swing sequence from impact to follow-through. The tee shot with the fairway or green visible in the background is the signature golf shot.

The Fairway

Stay well ahead of the group. Position so the golfer faces toward you as they approach. Walking shots mid-fairway show the course scale and the lone player against the landscape. Great for environmental storytelling.

The Green

Position off the green — never step on the putting surface. Low angle looking across the green shows the hole in the background. The putting stroke from a low angle reveals technique and focus. Capture the ball dropping into the cup.

Bunker Shots

Sand explosions are visually dramatic — position perpendicular to the bunker. Shoot from just outside the bunker edge at sand level. The sand spray around the ball is the defining bunker shot.

Golf allows you to follow specific players throughout their round — build a narrative of their game from hole 1 to 18.

TEE SHOTS

- ☐ Golfer at address — pre-shot routine
- ☐ Full backswing at maximum coil
- ☐ Impact — club and ball contact
- ☐ Follow-through — full extension and balance
- ☐ Ball flight leaving the tee if light allows

APPROACH SHOTS

- ☐ Iron swing from the fairway
- ☐ Divot flying after iron contact
- ☐ Player watching the ball flight
- ☐ Fairway wood or hybrid off the deck

BUNKER PLAY

- ☐ Sand explosion at impact — sand spray
- ☐ Player's face of concentration entering bunker
- ☐ Recovery reaction after escaping the bunker

PUTTING

- ☐ Reading the putt — low crouch studying the line
- ☐ Putting stroke — head down at impact
- ☐ Ball dropping into the hole (rare but gold)
- ☐ Celebration after a long putt goes in

ON COURSE

- ☐ Player and caddy discussing club selection
- ☐ Walking down a scenic fairway hole
- ☐ Player checking scorecard or yardage book
- ☐ Two players walking together between holes

EMOTION

- ☐ Birdie fist pump reaction
- ☐ Frustration after a missed putt
- ☐ Coach congratulating a great shot
- ☐ Team score check during a match

Golf Photographer Etiquette

- Use silent shutter mode — motor drive during a swing will end your day
- Never stand in the golfer's peripheral vision at address
- Always stay on designated spectator areas and cart paths
- Move only when the golfer is walking — never during the pre-shot routine

The Full Swing Sequence

- A complete golf swing unfolds in 4 phases: address, backswing, impact, follow-through
- Address: club behind ball, player focused — quiet, deliberate moment
- Backswing peak: maximum coil, club parallel or above — start burst here
- Impact: everything happens in 1/2000s — only burst mode catches it

The Putting Story

- Low angle looking across the green tells the putting story best
- Shoot from just off the green surface — camera almost on the ground
- Ball-in-hole moments are rare but extraordinary — be in position on long putts
- The crouch while reading the line reveals character — shoot from behind the player

Follow One Player

- Assign one photographer to one golfer for a complete round narrative
- Document hole by hole: tee shot, approach, chip, putt, reaction
- This creates a feature story rather than individual action shots
- The emotional arc of a round — birdies, bogeys, recovery — is a great yearbook spread

Environmental Storytelling

- Golf courses are visually beautiful — use the environment
- Lone golfer against a large sky is one of the best sports images
- Morning dew on the green, fog on the fairway, fall colors — use seasonal context
- The flag in the hole with player approaching tells the story without words

Yearbook Coverage

- Every team member should have at least one swing shot
- The scorecard at the end of a close match tells the story without words
- Team celebration after a match win is the group shot
- Individual portraits between holes are natural and relaxed — take advantage

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

SUNNY FAIRWAY

1/1000-2000s • f/4-5.6 • ISO 100-400 • Silent Shutter • Burst

WOODED / SHADED

1/640-800s • f/2.8 • ISO 800-1600 • Silent Shutter • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Tee shot impact — club and ball at contact
2. Full follow-through — complete swing extension and balance
3. Bunker explosion — sand spray around the ball
4. Putting crouch — reading the line low to the green
5. Birdie fist pump — celebration after the ball drops
6. Lone golfer against the sky or course landscape
7. Ball dropping into the hole (be ready on all long putts)
8. Player and coach discussing strategy on a hole
9. Backswing peak — maximum coil before the downswing
10. Team celebration after a match or invitational win

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Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS & ACTIVIT

Cheerleading

Photography Guide

Cheerleading combines athletics, artistry, and energy. Stunts, tumbling, and jumps all demand a fast shutter and anticipation — every second at the peak is the money shot.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Indoor & outdoor comp guide

02

Position Guide

Where to stand for stunts & jumps

03

Shot Checklist

Stunts, tumbles, jumps & spirit

04

Pro Tips

Timing stunts and catching the peak

Cheerleading photography splits between sideline coverage (outdoor, variable light) and competition coverage (indoor gym lighting). The most important setting: fast shutter speed. A flyer at the peak of a basket toss is airborne for under one second.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Sideline / Outdoor Game

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/1600s
Aperture	f/2.8 – f/4
ISO	400 – 800
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Auto / Daylight
Metering	Evaluative

Indoor Competition Gym

Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Auto / Tungsten
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best all-around cheer lens
- Works sideline and competition
- Fast enough for indoor gyms
- Versatile for stunts and tumbling

85mm f/1.4 or f/1.8

- Maximum light for dark gyms
- Stunt isolation at shallow depth
- Competition floor shots up close
- Portraits and group warmup shots

35-50mm f/1.8

- Wide formation and pyramid shots
- Full squad in routine formation
- Stadium atmosphere and spirit
- Team group photo after competition

Position is everything in cheerleading photography. For stunts, shoot slightly below the flyer. For jumps, shoot from a low angle.

Basket Toss & Stunts

Position 15-20 feet in front of the stunt group at a slight angle. Never stand directly below a toss. Shoot from knee height pointing slightly upward to capture the flyer against the sky or ceiling. The peak of the toss — flyer fully extended — is the hero frame.

Pyramids & Formations

Back up far enough to include the full pyramid. Use a wider lens to capture all levels simultaneously. A slight elevated angle (standing on bleachers) shows all tiers of the pyramid cleanly.

Tumbling Passes

Side angle, low to the ground, is best for tumbling. Position so the run is coming toward or across you — not away. The back handspring at full extension is the most photogenic tumbling moment.

Jumps

Low angle looking up captures the full extension of jumps. Toe touch and herkie jumps look best from the front-side angle. Start burst at the beginning of the approach, not at the jump.

Cheerleading has both planned (routine) and spontaneous (sideline reaction) moments. Cover both for a complete yearbook spread.

STUNTS

- ☐ Basket toss — flyer at peak fully extended
- ☐ Liberty or extension — flyer on one foot
- ☐ Pyramid — all levels visible in one frame
- ☐ Cradle catch — flyer being caught by bases
- ☐ Stunt prep and dismount sequences

TUMBLING

- ☐ Back handspring at full extension
- ☐ Round-off back tuck — airborne moment
- ☐ Running tumbling pass full sequence
- ☐ Standing back tuck or back handspring

JUMPS

- ☐ Toe touch — both legs fully extended
- ☐ Herkie — signature cheerleading jump
- ☐ Pike jump — legs parallel to the ground
- ☐ Jump series — sequence of multiple jumps

SPIRIT & SIDELINE

- ☐ Cheer formation facing the crowd or stands
- ☐ Megaphone cheer — held high or pointed at crowd
- ☐ Dance break during a game timeout
- ☐ Crowd engagement — getting students hyped

COMPETITION

- ☐ Full squad on the floor at competition start
- ☐ Difficult stunt moments from the routine
- ☐ Judges table with score reveal if accessible
- ☐ Team reaction to their final score

EMOTION

- ☐ Competition celebration after a great routine
- ☐ Coach hugging team after performance
- ☐ Tears after a loss at championships
- ☐ Team in a circle pre-routine ritual

Time the Toss

- Pre-focus on the spot where the flyer will peak before the toss begins
- Start burst when the bases begin the dip — not when the flyer leaves their hands
- The flyer is airborne for less than 2 seconds — you only get one burst window
- Position so the flyer is against a clear background — not a cluttered crowd

Low Angle is Everything

- The most powerful cheerleading shots come from low angles
- Kneel or sit on the floor to shoot jumps and stunts looking upward
- Low angle makes a toe touch look twice as high as it really is
- Competition floors often allow seated photographers at the edge of the mat

Safety First Always

- Never position yourself under a stunt or toss — ever
- Stay outside the performance area during routines — no exceptions
- Be aware of tumbling direction — a run is predictable, position accordingly
- Ask the coach which stunts are in the routine so you can prepare your angle

Read the Routine

- Competition routines are choreographed — ask the coach for the order
- Knowing that the basket toss is at count 32 lets you pre-position and pre-focus
- Sideline cheers repeat — you get multiple attempts at the same stunt
- Film the first performance to map the routine, then shoot the second

Competition vs. Sideline

- Competition: controlled environment, better lighting, planned routine — prioritize accuracy
- Sideline: spontaneous, game energy, cheerleader-fan interaction — prioritize emotion
- Competition photos need technical precision: sharp, full stunt, clean background
- Sideline photos need human energy: connection, crowd, school spirit in context

Yearbook Needs

- Every squad member should appear in at least one photo
- The full squad formation is the group photo for the cheerleading section
- Basket toss is the signature cheerleading image — make sure it appears
- Competition or game night squad photo is the section header image

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

SIDELINE / OUTDOOR

1/1000-1600s • f/2.8-4 • ISO 400-800 • Continuous AF • Burst

COMPETITION GYM

1/800-1000s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Auto WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Basket toss — flyer at full extension above the group

2. Pyramid — all levels visible in one wide frame

3. Toe touch — both legs fully extended horizontal

4. Back handspring at full extension — arms up body arched

5. Liberty stunt — flyer on one foot at extension

6. Competition routine highlight moment

7. Team reaction to competition score — raw emotion

8. Coach and team pre-routine circle

9. Crowd engagement — connecting with the student section

10. Squad group photo in uniform on the sideline

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TrailMark Yearbooks

Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Lacrosse

Photography Guide

Lacrosse blends the speed of hockey, the physicality of football, and the field of soccer. Fast, physical, and full of gear — it produces some of the most dramatic sports photography.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Outdoor field day & evening guide

02

Field Position Map

6 positions for attack & defense

03

Shot Checklist

Goals, checks, saves & celebrations

04

Pro Tips

Gear, speed & reading the attack

Lacrosse is played outdoors in natural light — similar to soccer. Fast shutter speeds are essential to freeze stick and ball movement. The lacrosse ball moves at 70-90 mph. Use 1/1000s minimum. The gear adds visual interest — include helmets and sticks in frame.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Outdoor Day Game

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/2000s
Aperture	f/4 – f/5.6
ISO	200 – 600
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight
Metering	Evaluative

Evening / Turf Lights

Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Tungsten / Auto
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

300-400mm f/4

- Reach from the sideline to the goal
- Compress players for visual impact
- Essential for far-goal coverage
- Monopod recommended for long games

70-200mm f/2.8

- Versatile for all field positions
- Works well near the crease
- Best for evening / turf light games
- Good for celebrations and saves

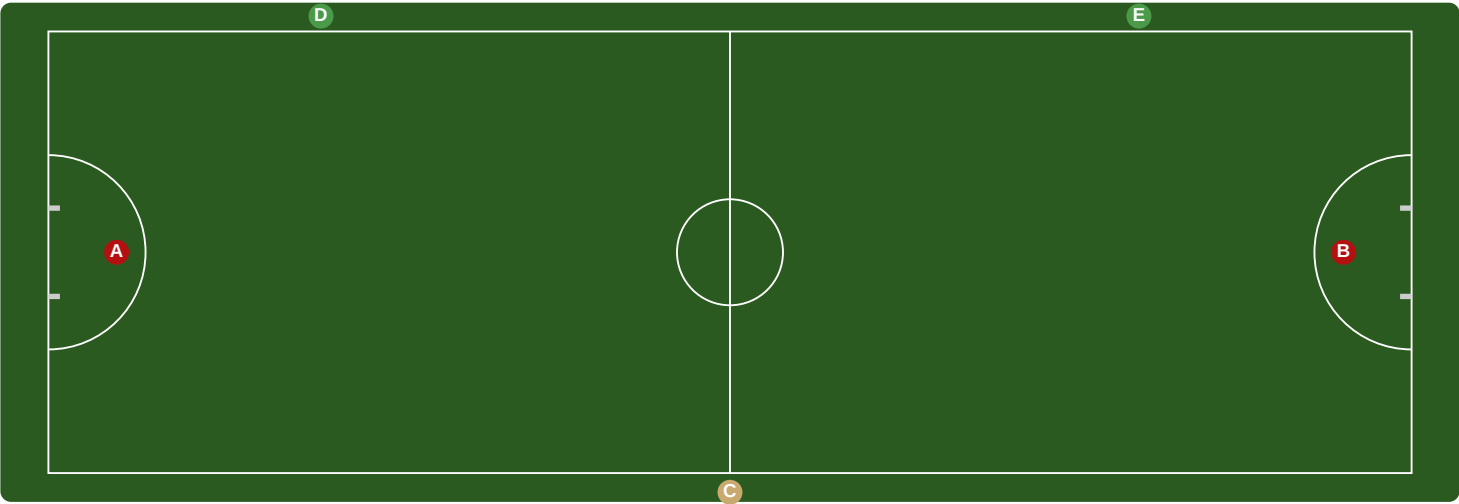
24-70mm f/2.8

- Sideline team atmosphere
- Player entering the field / warm-up
- Wide goal celebration with full team
- Coach and player interaction



Position near the attacking goal. Lacrosse action concentrates near the crease — proximity to the goal produces the best shots.

PHOTOGRAPHER POSITION MAP



POSITION GUIDE

A — Near Goal Crease

- Stay outside the crease at all times
- Best for: shots on goal and goalie saves
- Physical body checks near the crease
- Dodge moves and close-range finishes

C — Midfield Sideline

- Transition play happens at midfield
- Dodge and drive moves through traffic
- Ground ball scrambles and face-offs
- Midfield is often overlooked — but valuable

D/E — Attack & Defense Zones

- Attack zone: crease coverage from angle
- Defense zone: clearing and riding plays
- Best for showing the full field context
- Switch sides based on direction of attack

Lacrosse is high-scoring and fast. Stay near the attacking goal and anticipate shots — the crease is where the best moments happen.

ATTACK

- ☐ Shot on goal — stick and ball at release
- ☐ Goal celebration — scorer and teammates
- ☐ Dodge move — player juking a defender
- ☐ Dodge to goal — full speed drive to crease
- ☐ Behind-the-back or trick shot attempt

DEFENSE

- ☐ Goalie save — body fully extended
- ☐ Body check — stick and shoulder contact
- ☐ Ground ball scramble — sticks clashing
- ☐ Clearing pass from defense to midfield

FACE-OFF

- ☐ Face-off — sticks down at center X
- ☐ Player winning the clamp and run
- ☐ Ground ball battle after the face-off

GEAR & ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ Helmet visor close-up — identity in equipment
- ☐ Crosse in action — stick catching a pass
- ☐ Full uniform — number, helmet, and gear visible
- ☐ Team warming up with stick work drills

SIDELINE & EMOTION

- ☐ Bench eruption after a goal
- ☐ Player celebrating with the crowd
- ☐ Coach directing play from the sideline
- ☐ Player checking equipment during a timeout

POST-GAME

- ☐ Team celebration after a win
- ☐ Goalie perspective after a great save
- ☐ Handshake line with opponents
- ☐ Senior Night ceremony on the field

Anticipate the Dodge

- Watch the attack player's feet — a plant and pivot signals a dodge move
- Get in burst before the dodge begins — not when you see the move
- Dodges to the goal produce the best action-to-goal sequences
- Position so the player is coming toward you for the most direct angle

The Goalie Save

- Goalies are the most dramatic lacrosse shot — prioritize them
- Position at crease level, slightly to the side, shooting toward the goal
- Goalie fully extended to one side is the iconic lacrosse save image
- Pre-focus on the goal mouth before the shot — not on the ball

Embrace the Gear

- Lacrosse equipment makes for visually compelling images
- Helmet visor, shoulder pads, and stick create a distinct visual identity
- Include equipment in frame — a player in full gear is recognizably lacrosse
- Stick-to-stick contact and checks are visually distinctive — chase them

Ground Ball Chaos

- Ground ball scrambles are among the most intense lacrosse moments
- Multiple sticks fighting for a loose ball creates a visually dense image
- Position low to show the sticks on the ground level
- The player emerging from a ground ball with possession is a triumphant shot

Face-Off Coverage

- Face-offs are predictable — position at center X before each one
- The clamp at the snap is fast — burst through the entire face-off
- Player breaking free with the ball is the resolution of the face-off story
- Face-off specialists have unique crouching technique — worth documenting

Yearbook Coverage

- Every position (attack, midfield, defense, goalie) needs representation
- The goalie is often the most visually dramatic individual image in lacrosse
- Team goal celebration shows the collective joy of scoring
- Get jersey numbers visible — lacrosse helmets make identification harder

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

DAY GAME

1/1000-2000s • f/4-5.6 • ISO 200-600 • Continuous AF • Burst

EVENING / TURF LIGHTS

1/800-1000s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Auto WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Shot on goal — stick and ball at release point
2. Goalie save — full extension across the goal
3. Dodge move — player juking a defender in the crease area
4. Body check — stick and shoulder contact
5. Ground ball scramble — sticks and players fighting for possession
6. Goal celebration — scorer and teammates
7. Face-off clamp — sticks down at center X
8. Behind-the-back or trick shot attempt
9. Player in full gear close-up — helmet visor and stick
10. Team celebration after a close win

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TrailMark Yearbooks

Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Hockey

Photography Guide

Hockey is the fastest team sport in the world.

Shooting through glass, tracking pucks at 90+ mph, and managing arena lighting — hockey photography is the ultimate challenge.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Arena lighting & glass guide

02

Rink Position Map

Best spots around the ice

03

Shot Checklist

Goals, saves, checks & celebrations

04

Pro Tips

Shooting through the glass

Hockey arenas present two challenges: poor lighting and shooting through glass. You need maximum aperture and high ISO. Position your lens perpendicular to the glass and get as close as possible to eliminate glare and reflections.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Standard Arena (Fluorescent)

Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	3200 – 6400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Fluorescent / 4000K
Metering	Center-Weighted

LED Arena Lighting

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/1250s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Auto / 5000K
Metering	Evaluative

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best for hockey — fast and versatile
- Works through the glass clearly
- Reach from end boards to blue line
- The go-to lens for most rinks

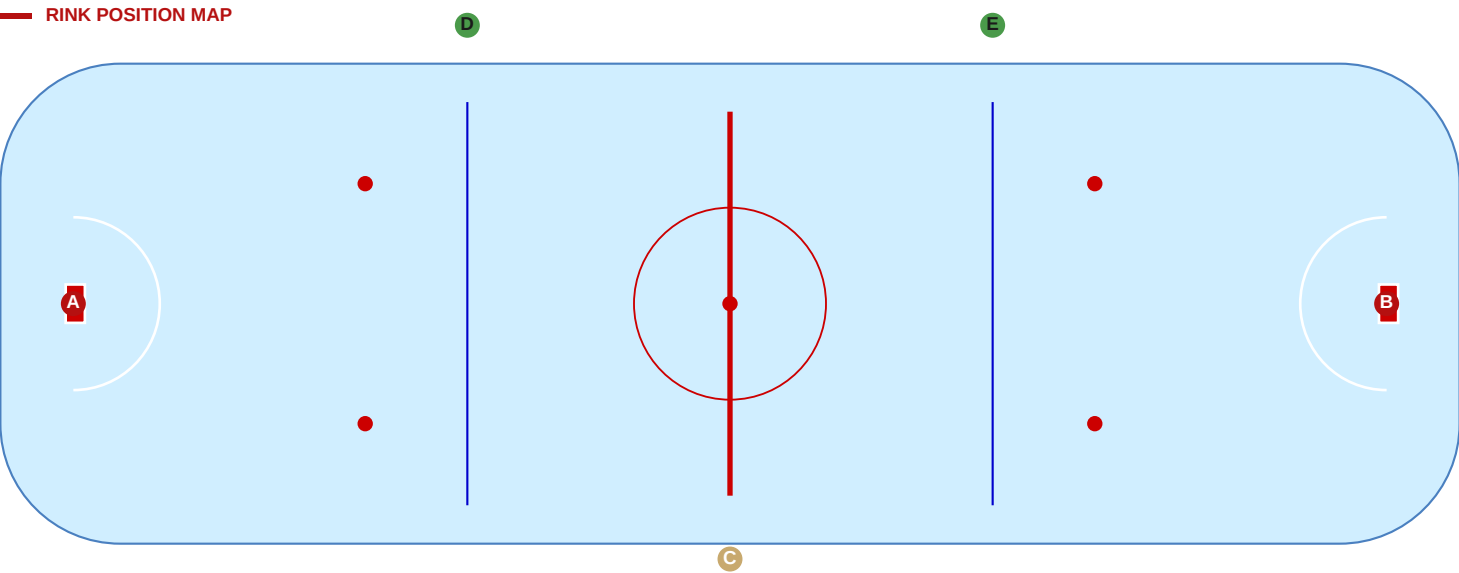
300mm f/2.8 or f/4

- Reach from one end to the other
- Compression at shooting positions
- Best for large pro-style rinks
- Use if arena allows open areas

85mm f/1.4

- Maximum light for dark arenas
- Tight face shots through the glass
- Bench and player emotion coverage
- Use in the end areas near the net

Hockey photographers work through the glass. Position your lens flush against it at a 90-degree angle to eliminate reflections.



A/B — End Boards ● Press lens against glass at 90 degrees ● Best for: shots on goal and goalie saves ● Body checks behind the net ● Puck battles in the corner	C — Center Ice Glass ● Full ice view for transition plays ● Rush plays coming end-to-end ● 2-on-1 and breakaway coverage ● Center ice face-offs from this position	D/E — Blue Line Glass ● Zone entry and point shot coverage ● Power play setup from the point ● Breakout passes from the defense ● Switch based on which end is attacking
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Hockey moves faster than any other sport. Be in position before the puck enters your zone. Repositioning during live play is nearly impossible — plan ahead and stay in your spot.

SHOOTING & SCORING

- ☐ Shot on goal — stick and body position
- ☐ Puck crossing the goal line — goal!
- ☐ One-timer from the circle — full swing
- ☐ Deflection in front of the net
- ☐ Breakaway — player alone on goalie

GOALIE

- ☐ Glove save — glove extended above shoulder
- ☐ Pad save — butterfly position extended
- ☐ Goalie freeze — covering the puck
- ☐ Goalie poke check on a breakaway

CHECKING

- ☐ Body check along the boards — both players
- ☐ Poke check at the puck — stick extended
- ☐ Slap shot from the point — blade contact

PUCK BATTLES

- ☐ Corner battle — sticks and bodies
- ☐ Face-off at center or zone face-off dot
- ☐ Puck retrieval after an icing call
- ☐ Board battle for possession

BENCH & EMOTION

- ☐ Bench eruption after a goal
- ☐ Player on the bench mask off — face shot
- ☐ Coach behind the bench directing
- ☐ Line change chaos on the fly

POST-GAME

- ☐ Team celebration after the final horn
- ☐ Gloves and sticks on the ice after win
- ☐ Handshake line — tradition in hockey
- ☐ Captain raising a trophy if applicable

The Glass Technique

- Press your lens hood directly against the glass — flush contact eliminates reflection
- The lens must be perpendicular to the glass — any angle creates glare
- Cupping your hand around the lens and glass eliminates peripheral light
- Never use a UV filter when shooting through the glass — it creates double-reflection

Find the Gaps

- Some rinks have open sections at the ends — use them when available
- The penalty box door area sometimes has open viewing — excellent spot
- End zone boards often have camera ports at the bottom — watch for them
- Ask the facility manager before the game about available shooting positions

Track the Puck

- The puck is small, fast, and dark — tracking it by eye at speed is hard
- Use continuous AF on the player with the puck, not the puck itself
- Pre-focus where you expect the shot to come from — the slot in front of the net
- When a player winds up for a shot, immediately focus on the net — the puck will go there

Arena Lighting Challenges

- Every arena is different — test your exposure during warmups
- Fluorescent overhead lights flicker — use 1/800s or slower to avoid banding
- Color casts from arena lights vary widely — set white balance manually from a white ice surface
- The ice reflects light upward — this helps exposure near the ice surface

Gear for Hockey

- Cold arena + equipment changes = fogged lens when moving from cold to warm
- Keep a microfiber cloth accessible for immediate defogging
- Protect your camera from flying pucks — especially at open end positions
- Dress warmly — you'll be stationary against cold glass for extended periods

Yearbook Coverage

- The goalie in the butterfly with arms out is the signature hockey image
- A goal celebration with arms raised and teammates converging is essential
- Gloves and sticks pile on the ice after a win — iconic hockey tradition
- The handshake line after a playoff game is the most meaningful hockey ritual

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

FLUORESCENT ARENA 1/800-1000s • f/2.8 • ISO 3200-6400 • Press glass flat • Burst

LED ARENA 1/1000-1250s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Auto WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. **Goalie butterfly save — fully extended across the crease**
2. **Goal! — puck crossing the line or celebration**
3. **Breakaway — player alone heading toward the goalie**
4. One-timer — full swing contact from the circle
5. Body check along the boards — both players in frame
6. Glove save — glove extended to the top corner
7. Corner puck battle — sticks, bodies, determination
8. Bench eruption after a goal — masks off, arms up
9. Gloves and sticks on the ice after a win
10. Handshake line — teams skating past each other



HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

Homecoming Game

Photography Guide

Homecoming is the biggest regular-season game of the year — equal parts athletics and community. The game is only half the story — capture the court, halftime, and school spirit too.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Lighting guide for this event

02

Position Guide

Best spots to cover this event

03

Shot Checklist

Every key moment covered

04

Pro Tips

Making the most of the occasion

Homecoming is a high-energy outdoor game with maximum school spirit and pageantry. Document the full spectacle: game action, court ceremony, halftime show, and the student section.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Day Game

Shutter Speed	1/1000s – 1/2000s
Aperture	f/2.8 – f/4
ISO	200 – 400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight
Metering	Evaluative

Night Game

Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Tungsten
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best all-around homecoming lens
- Game action and crowd coverage
- Works day or night kickoff
- Court ceremony and halftime too

300mm f/4

- Reach across the full field
- Compress the packed student section
- Midfield action from the sideline
- Best for wide field coverage

24-70mm f/2.8

- Homecoming court wide ceremony shot
- Halftime band full formation
- Team celebration after the win
- Crown and crowd wide coverage

Homecoming demands full-event coverage — plan your shooting schedule around the game, halftime, and court ceremony.

Game Action

Use all football guide positioning and techniques for the game itself. Focus on big plays with the packed stadium atmosphere visible in the background. Player celebrations with the student section behind them elevate the image from a game shot to a homecoming shot.

Homecoming Court

Position on the field or track during the court procession. The crowning moment — freeze the exact second the crown is placed. Capture the royal couple walking off together and the crowd reacting to the announcement.

Halftime Show

Get elevated for the full marching band formation — bleachers or press box. Drum major leading with the baton at full height is the key halftime shot. Stay for the full show and capture the finale formation.

Student Section

The student section at homecoming is the loudest it will be all year. Wide angle to capture the full section — painted faces, costumes, signs. Tight shots of individual spirit moments. The section reacting to a big play is pure energy.

Document every element: game, court, halftime, and student section. Homecoming tells the story of school community.

Homecoming Court

- ☐ Court procession on the field in formal wear
- ☐ King and Queen crowning — freeze the crown placement
- ☐ Court group photo on the field
- ☐ Couple walking off together after being crowned

Halftime Show

- ☐ Full band formation from elevated angle
- ☐ Drum major or band director leading
- ☐ Color guard flag work in motion
- ☐ Halftime show finale formation

Game Highlights

- ☐ Big play with packed stadium in background
- ☐ Team tunnel entrance pregame
- ☐ Student section at maximum noise
- ☐ Final horn — win or loss, the emotion

Post-Game

- ☐ Team celebration on the field
- ☐ King and Queen post-game photo
- ☐ Students storming the field if a big win
- ☐ Coach and players after a homecoming victory

Shoot the Full Story

- Homecoming is not just a football game — it is a community event
- Build your shot list before kickoff: court, halftime, student section, game
- Assign two photographers if possible — one on the field, one in the stands
- The story of homecoming is in the faces and the crowd, not just the scoreboard

Court Ceremony Timing

- Get on the field or near it 10 minutes before halftime begins
- The crown placement is 1-2 seconds — be in burst mode ready beforehand
- Position so the reaction from the crowd is visible behind the couple
- Shoot both the crowned couple and the crowd simultaneously if you can

Halftime Show Coverage

- Elevate immediately at halftime — bleachers or press box for formation shots
- The full band formation from above is the must-have halftime image
- Ground level facing the drum major shows leadership and scale
- Band director on the press box or sideline is a character shot worth capturing

Student Section Energy

- The student section at homecoming is a yearbook spread on its own
- Wide establishing shot: scale, color, and energy of the full section
- Move in for face paint, costumes, and creative signs — the details tell the story
- Reaction shot on a big play — the section exploding is pure homecoming

Day vs. Night Strategy

- Day games: natural light everywhere — freedom to roam and experiment
- Night games: set exposure during warmups and test the student section lights
- At night the atmosphere is often more dramatic — embrace the lights and shadows
- Night homecoming with stadium lights and a packed crowd is visually spectacular

Yearbook Coverage Goals

- Court processional and crowning are non-negotiable shots
- The halftime formation is the band section header image for the year
- Student section reaction to a scoring play is the community spread anchor
- Post-game: the full emotional range of winning a homecoming game

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

DAY GAME

1/1000-2000s • f/2.8-4 • ISO 200-400 • Daylight WB • Burst

NIGHT GAME

1/800-1000s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Tungsten WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Homecoming King and Queen crowning moment on the field

2. Full marching band formation from elevated angle at halftime

3. Student section at maximum energy — painted faces and signs

4. Big play with packed stadium visible in the background

5. Court processional walking on the field in formal wear

6. Team tunnel entrance and pregame hype

7. Drum major leading the band with baton at full height

8. Final score and team celebration after the homecoming game

9. Royal couple walking off together after being crowned

10. Team and crowd together after a homecoming victory

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TrailMark Yearbooks

Photo Curriculum Series

HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

Homecoming Dance

Photography Guide

Homecoming Dance is pure joy — candid and posed, slow songs and group dances. The mixed lighting is your biggest challenge and greatest creative opportunity.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Lighting guide for this event

02

Position Guide

Best spots to cover this event

03

Shot Checklist

Every key moment covered

04

Pro Tips

Making the most of the occasion

Dance venues present challenging mixed lighting — DJ lights, ambient venue lighting, and flash all interact differently. Use a flash with a diffuser or bounce off the ceiling. Test your settings before dancing begins.

CAMERA SETTINGS

With Flash (Bounce)

Shutter Speed	1/125s – 1/200s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	800 – 1600
Focus Mode	Single AF
Drive Mode	Single / Burst
White Balance	Auto / Flash
Metering	Evaluative

Available Light Only

Shutter Speed	1/125s – 1/200s
Aperture	f/1.8 – f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Single AF
Drive Mode	Single Shot
White Balance	Auto
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

85mm f/1.8

- Portraits in low venue light
- Candid dancing moments
- Couple shots on the dance floor
- Available light without flash

35mm f/1.8

- Wide group shots on the dance floor
- Venue atmosphere establishing shot
- Arrival and grand march photos
- Full dance floor energy

50mm f/1.4

- Best balance of reach and light
- Works with or without flash
- Natural perspective for portraits
- Versatile for groups and candid

Dance photography requires balancing flash and available light. Arrive early to test your setup in the actual venue.

Grand March and Arrival

Best time for clean well-lit portraits and group photos. Natural window or lobby ambient light means no flash is needed here. Full group photos of friend groups before the dance are the most requested images. Individual couple portraits — posed but relaxed and genuine.

On the Dance Floor

Use a bounce flash off the ceiling for natural-looking fill light. Shoot toward DJ lights for dramatic backlit silhouette effects. Get low and shoot up through the crowd for energy and scale. Capture the peak of a popular song when everyone is dancing at once.

Slow Dance Moments

Turn off flash for slow dances — ambient light only creates intimacy. Side lighting from the venue creates beautiful natural separation. Shoot from a respectful distance — candid over posed during slow songs. Focus on hands, smiles, and genuine human connection.

DJ and Atmosphere

The DJ booth with lighting equipment makes for a visually interesting establishing shot. Long exposure of laser light patterns across the dance floor. Wide venue shot showing the full dance floor from an elevated position. Light trails from moving DJ lights are creative yearbook-worthy images.

Dance is one of the most photographed school events — push for something different than the typical flash-in-the-face shot.

ARRIVAL AND GRAND MARCH

- ☐ Full friend group posed photo in best lighting
- ☐ Individual couple photo — most requested image
- ☐ Arrival candid — genuine excitement at the door
- ☐ Ticket entry moment — first step into the venue

DANCE FLOOR

- ☐ Group circle around one person dancing
- ☐ Popular song peak — everyone in sync
- ☐ Student doing a signature dance move
- ☐ DJ with hands up and crowd responding

SLOW SONGS

- ☐ Couple in gentle conversation during a slow song
- ☐ Group of friends slow dancing together and laughing
- ☐ The quiet genuine moment between two people

DECOR AND ATMOSPHERE

- ☐ Theme decor close-up — flowers, lights, backdrop
- ☐ Venue from elevated angle looking down at dance floor
- ☐ Photo booth candid moment — unposed and natural
- ☐ End of night — shoes off, hair down, still smiling

Nail the Arrival Shot

- Grand march is your best-lit opportunity of the night — do not rush it
- Use window or lobby light for clean portraits before entering the venue
- Have a clean neutral background ready — a blank wall or drape works well
- Take group photos first then individual couples — it flows more naturally

Bounce Flash Technique

- Aim your flash at the ceiling at a 45-degree angle — not directly at the subject
- Bounce flash creates soft, even, natural-looking light on the dance floor
- Test your bounce distance — higher ceilings require more flash power
- White or neutral ceilings work best — colored ceilings add a color cast

Work the DJ Lights

- Backlight from DJ lights can create stunning silhouettes — shoot toward them
- Colored light patterns on the dance floor are part of the visual story
- Long exposure 1/30s with flash creates a sharp subject and blurred light trails
- Turn off your flash and shoot ambient only for atmospheric wide shots

Respect the Slow Dance

- Slow dances are intimate — no flash, no intrusion
- Use a longer focal length to capture from a distance
- The hand on a shoulder or the look between two people is worth more than a posed shot
- Give students privacy — candid respectful observation is the right approach

Candid Over Posed

- The best dance photos are not posed — they are genuine moments
- Tell subjects you are photographing and then wait for them to forget you
- A group mid-laugh is worth ten formal posed group shots
- Move constantly — the same angle produces the same photo all night

Yearbook Coverage Goals

- Every friend group should have at least one great photo
- The dance floor at peak energy is the section header image
- Slow dance candid is the emotional anchor of the spread
- Venue decor and atmosphere establish the context of the event

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

WITH FLASH

1/125-200s • f/2.8 • ISO 800-1600 • Bounce Flash • Single Shot

AVAILABLE LIGHT

1/125-200s • f/1.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Auto WB • Single Shot

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Grand march arrival — full friend group posed in best light
2. Couple portrait in natural venue light before entering
3. Full dance floor at peak energy — everyone dancing
4. DJ booth with lights and crowd in background
5. Slow dance — genuine candid ambient light moment
6. Best dressed or themed group standing together
7. Venue decor establishing shot — theme and atmosphere
8. Group of friends candid mid-laugh during a song
9. DJ light patterns across the dance floor — creative
10. End of night — happy, disheveled, and still smiling



HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

Prom

Photography Guide

Prom is the culminating social event of high school. Formal, emotional, and full of significance — these photos will be treasured for decades. Do them justice.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Lighting guide for this event

02

Position Guide

Best spots to cover this event

03

Shot Checklist

Every key moment covered

04

Pro Tips

Making the most of the occasion



Prom photography spans from outdoor pre-prom gatherings in natural light to formal indoor venue coverage. Bring two setups if possible: one for outdoor natural light portraits, one for indoor flash work.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Outdoor Pre-Prom (Natural)	
Shutter Speed	1/400s – 1/800s
Aperture	f/2.8 – f/4
ISO	200 – 400
Focus Mode	Single AF
Drive Mode	Single / Burst
White Balance	Daylight / Cloudy
Metering	Evaluative

Indoor Venue	
Shutter Speed	1/125s – 1/160s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	800 – 1600
Focus Mode	Single AF
Drive Mode	Single Shot
White Balance	Auto / Flash
Metering	Center-Weighted

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

85mm f/1.8

- Beautiful portrait focal length
- Soft background separation outdoors
- Flattering for formal portraits
- Versatile for posed and candid

35mm f/1.8

- Group photos at outdoor venue
- Full venue wide shots inside
- Dance floor energy coverage
- Natural perspective for candid

70-200mm f/2.8

- Candid arrivals from a distance
- Compress outdoor backdrop
- Inside: reach for all situations
- Versatile in low venue light

Prom happens in two phases — outdoor pre-prom and indoor venue. Plan your approach for each phase separately.

Pre-Prom Portraits

Golden hour timing is ideal — aim for one hour before sunset if scheduling allows. Individual and group portraits with a clean outdoor or architectural background. Couples and friend groups deserve equal attention — everyone should go home with a great photo. Candid arrival moments capture the excitement of seeing each other dressed up.

Grand Entrance

The venue entrance is a natural photo opportunity — every couple walks through it. Capture the reaction to the venue itself — the first look at the prom space is genuine. Theme decor and atmosphere as students arrive sets the visual context. A red carpet or arrival line creates a natural portrait position.

Dancing and Prom Court

Use bounce flash for dance floor coverage. DJ and crowd at the peak of a popular song is the energy anchor shot. Prom court announcement and crowning are the ceremony highlights. Slow dance moments are best with ambient light for intimacy and authenticity.

The Senior Story

Prom photos are often used in graduation slideshows — document seniors with intention. Group of seniors together on their last prom is a milestone shot. A quiet moment between two people away from the dance floor captures the depth of the occasion. The friendship across four years is visible in candid senior group shots.

Prom is the highest-stakes school event photography. Students and parents will reference these photos for decades.

PRE-PROM

- ☐ Full friend group formal photo outdoors
- ☐ Individual couple portrait — posed and natural
- ☐ Arrival candid — genuine excitement and nerves
- ☐ Getting ready detail: corsage pin or boutonniere

GRAND ENTRANCE

- ☐ Couple arriving and walking into the venue
- ☐ First look at the decorated prom space — genuine reaction
- ☐ Theme decor detail shots — flowers, lights, backdrop
- ☐ Students checking in or receiving their table cards

DANCE AND COURT

- ☐ Prom court announcement — crowd and nominees
- ☐ King and Queen crowning — freeze the crown placement
- ☐ First dance if school has a traditional one
- ☐ Dance floor at peak — the most popular song of the night

CANDID SENIOR MOMENTS

- ☐ Two seniors in genuine conversation away from the crowd
- ☐ Group photo that captures real friendship not just smiles
- ☐ A couple sharing a quiet moment
- ☐ The end of the night — shoes off, hair down, still smiling

The Pre-Prom Window

- Pre-prom is your best chance for clean, well-exposed portraits
- Arrive 30 minutes before the group to scout your background locations
- Natural light with the sun behind you and slightly to the side is ideal
- Overcast is actually perfect — soft even light with no harsh shadows

Nail the Group Photo

- Full friend group photo is the most requested prom image — nail it
- Find a clean background with no distracting elements behind the group
- Arrange the group in 2-3 rows and shoot from slightly elevated
- Shoot 5-8 frames per group — eyes closed and bad expressions are inevitable

Prom Court Coverage

- The court announcement and crowning are predictable — be in position early
- Stand near the stage or dance floor 5 minutes before the announcement
- The crowning moment is 2-3 seconds — be in burst mode before it begins
- Capture the crowd reacting simultaneously with the newly crowned couple

Indoor Portrait Strategy

- Find any window or lamp with a warm directional quality for venue portraits
- Bounce flash off the ceiling for clean fill on the dance floor
- Avoid direct on-camera flash — it is flat and unflattering in formal settings
- The staircase or entrance arch is often the best portrait spot inside the venue

Senior Documentary Approach

- Prom is a milestone — document it with the weight it deserves
- Shoot the full arc: arrival, portraits, dancing, court, slow song, goodbye
- A quiet moment at the end of the night is often the most powerful image
- Friends who have known each other for years — their comfort shows in photos

Yearbook Coverage Goals

- Every senior couple should have at least one portrait from the night
- Prom court crowning is the headline image for the prom spread
- Dance floor at peak energy is the supporting spread anchor
- The end-of-night candid is the emotional closing image of the spread

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

OUTDOOR PRE-PROM

1/400-800s • f/2.8-4 • ISO 200-400 • Daylight WB • Single Shot

INDOOR VENUE

1/125-160s • f/2.8 • ISO 800-1600 • Bounce Flash • Single Shot

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Full friend group formal outdoor portrait
2. Couple portrait — golden hour outdoor if possible
3. Prom King and Queen crowning moment
4. Grand entrance — couple walking into the venue
5. Dance floor at peak — most popular song of the night
6. Slow dance — genuine candid ambient light moment
7. Prom theme decor establishing shot
8. Group of seniors together on their last prom
9. Candid senior moment away from the crowd
10. End of night — happy, disheveled, and memorable



HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

Graduation

Photography Guide

Graduation is the most emotionally significant event in a student's high school career. Capture the achievement, the pride, and the bittersweet feeling of an era ending.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Lighting guide for this event

02

Position Guide

Best spots to cover this event

03

Shot Checklist

Every key moment covered

04

Pro Tips

Making the most of the occasion

Graduation is typically outdoor in natural light — one of the better-lit school events to photograph. The challenge is distance: ceremonies are formal and photographers must work from designated areas.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Outdoor Ceremony (Day)

Shutter Speed	1/800s – 1/1000s
Aperture	f/4 – f/5.6
ISO	200 – 400
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Daylight / Auto
Metering	Evaluative

Indoor or Evening Ceremony

Shutter Speed	1/400s – 1/640s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	400 – 800
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	Single / Burst
White Balance	Cloudy / Auto
Metering	Evaluative

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

300-400mm f/4

- Reach from designated photo areas
- Diploma handshake from a distance
- Compress the processional line
- Essential for large ceremony venues

70-200mm f/2.8

- Versatile from front-permitted areas
- Crowd and family reactions
- Post-ceremony portrait coverage
- Good for pre-ceremony candids

85mm f/1.8

- Close-range portrait after ceremony
- Cap toss detail shots
- Family embrace immediately after
- Candid emotion in the crowd

Graduation is formal — work within designated areas. The moments before and after are often more accessible.

Processional

Capture the senior class arriving in caps and gowns — shoot from slightly elevated if possible. Individual seniors walking in — faces not just backs of caps. The moment a senior spots their family in the crowd is pure emotion. Pre-ceremony candids as students find their seats and connect with classmates.

The Diploma Walk

Use a long lens from the designated photographer area. Focus on the student at the handshake moment — capture the diploma changing hands. Student reaction turning away with diploma in hand — the realization. If possible, shoot a sequence: walk, shake, turn, react, celebrate.

The Cap Toss

The cap toss is the signature graduation image — pre-position early for it. Wide angle for the full class toss, telephoto to isolate individual caps in the air. Start burst as the announcement is made — caps go up almost instantly. Shoot slightly into the crowd so caps appear against sky or a clean background.

Before and After

Pre-ceremony candids: seniors finding friends, adjusting gowns, taking selfies. Immediate post-ceremony: family embraces are the most emotionally raw moments. Candid conversations with teachers — the real goodbyes happen informally. Groups of seniors in caps and gowns in natural outdoor settings.

Graduation has predictable key moments — be in position for each one before it begins.

PROCESSIONAL

- ☐ Senior class filing in together — school pride
- ☐ Individual senior spotting family in the crowd
- ☐ Administration and faculty lined up on stage
- ☐ Empty chairs before students arrive — anticipation

CEREMONY

- ☐ Diploma handshake — student and administrator
- ☐ Cap tassel move — left to right the official moment
- ☐ Valedictorian speech — face and engaged audience
- ☐ Audience reaction to a speech or recognition moment

CAP TOSS

- ☐ Wide: full class caps in the air at once
- ☐ Tight: individual cap spinning against the sky
- ☐ A cap landing on the ground — end of an era
- ☐ Student face mid-toss — the exact moment of release

AFTER CEREMONY

- ☐ Family embrace immediately after receiving diploma
- ☐ Group of seniors hugging in caps and gowns
- ☐ Senior with favorite teacher — the real goodbye
- ☐ Class of the year cap with school in the background

Know the Schedule

- Ask administration for the exact ceremony run of show in advance
- The diploma walk and cap toss are the two critical moments — plan for both
- Position for the diploma walk first — the toss comes at the very end
- Scout your camera positions during setup before families arrive

The Diploma Walk

- Long lens is essential — 300mm minimum from most permitted positions
- Pre-focus on the handshake point before the first graduate walks
- Shoot a burst of 5-8 frames for each graduate — you only get one chance
- The graduate turning toward the camera after the shake is the best frame

Cap Toss Preparation

- Position away from the direct sun so caps appear against sky — not the sun
- Wide angle body ready for the full class shot — telephoto for individuals
- Alert: caps go up FAST — be in burst and ready before the announcement ends
- Some schools do not toss caps — confirm with administration beforehand

The Family Moment

- Post-ceremony family embraces are the most emotionally powerful images
- Move to the family gathering area immediately after the toss
- Long lens lets you capture genuine family moments without intruding
- The first hug between a graduate and their parent is irreplaceable

The Goodbye Moments

- Teacher and student goodbyes happen informally after the ceremony
- These candid interactions are the most authentic graduation images
- The hallway or courtyard after the ceremony is full of real moments
- Seniors who have known each other for 12 years — the emotion is visible

Yearbook Coverage Goals

- Every senior should be recognizable in at least one graduation photo
- The cap toss is the headline image for the graduation spread
- Family embrace is the emotional anchor of the post-ceremony coverage
- Class of year group photo in caps and gowns is the closing spread image

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

OUTDOOR DAY

1/800-1000s • f/4-5.6 • ISO 200-400 • Daylight WB • Burst

INDOOR / EVENING

1/400-640s • f/2.8 • ISO 400-800 • Auto WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Cap toss — full class in the air simultaneously

2. Diploma handshake — student and principal or superintendent

3. Family embrace immediately after the ceremony

4. Processional — senior class walking in together in caps and gowns

5. Individual senior face mid-cap-toss — the exact moment of release

6. Valedictorian speech — face and audience engaged

7. Tassel move — left to right the official transition moment

8. Senior and favorite teacher — the real goodbye

9. Group of seniors in caps and gowns outdoors

10. Empty chairs before the ceremony — anticipation



HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

Pep Rally

Photography Guide

Pep rallies are controlled chaos — the loudest most energetic event a school produces. Your job: capture the noise, the spirit, and every group that takes the floor.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Lighting guide for this event

02

Position Guide

Best spots to cover this event

03

Shot Checklist

Every key moment covered

04

Pro Tips

Making the most of the occasion

Pep rallies are indoor gym events with challenging fluorescent or LED lighting above. The energy moves fast — be ready to reposition constantly as different groups perform.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Standard Gym (Fluorescent)

Shutter Speed	1/500s – 1/640s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Fluorescent / Auto
Metering	Center-Weighted

LED Gym

Shutter Speed	1/640s – 1/800s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	800 – 1600
Focus Mode	Continuous AF
Drive Mode	High-Speed Burst
White Balance	Auto / 4000K
Metering	Evaluative

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best all-around pep rally lens
- Reach from bleachers to floor
- Works in most gym lighting
- Versatile for all activities

35-50mm f/1.8

- Floor-level candid energy shots
- Maximum light in dark gyms
- Wide student section coverage
- MC and microphone moments

85mm f/1.4

- Best portraits of performers
- Cheerleader and team isolation
- Dark gym maximum light gathering
- Freeze fast performance moments

Pep rallies move fast. Know the order of events so you can pre-position. Ask for the program in advance.

Student Section

The student section at a pep rally is one of the most energetic shots in all of yearbook photography. Wide angle to show the full section — painted faces, costumes, signs, and the visual energy. Tight shots of individual face painting, spirit wear, or creative costumes. The moment a section reacts to their team or class being announced is pure energy.

Performance Groups

Cheerleaders and dance team use the same techniques as game coverage — refer to those guides for full detail. Sports teams being introduced — players running out or striking poses for the crowd. Student performances: lip sync, skit, or special acts. Band performing in the stands or on the floor.

Games and Competition

Class competition activities — relay race, trivia, or whatever the student council planned. Students selected from the crowd for floor games always produce great candid moments. Spirit competition between classes — who can cheer louder. A teacher or administrator participating is always a crowd favorite and a great photo.

MC and Leadership

The student MC at the microphone is the visual anchor of the rally. Class president or student body president leading organized cheers. Principal or coach addressing the student body — their energy matches the crowd. Any senior recognition or special announcement moment.

Cover the full rally from start to finish. Every class, every performance group, and every activity should appear.

STUDENT SECTION

- ☐ Full student section — show every class area
- ☐ Individual painted face or costume detail
- ☐ Class sign or banner held up high
- ☐ Section reacting to their class announcement

PERFORMANCES

- ☐ Cheerleader pyramid or basket toss on the floor
- ☐ Dance team full formation in routine
- ☐ Sports team running in for their introduction
- ☐ Band performance — formation or pep band in stands

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

- ☐ Floor game with selected students — peak action
- ☐ Class competition — team at the winning moment
- ☐ Student selected from crowd — surprised expression
- ☐ Teacher joining a student activity — huge crowd reaction

ATMOSPHERE

- ☐ Wide gym shot showing full scale and energy
- ☐ Overhead shot from elevated position if available
- ☐ Spirit banner or backdrop establishing the event
- ☐ Gym from the floor looking up at a full student section

Know the Program

- Ask student council or administration for the rally program in advance
- Map out which section of the gym each group performs from
- Pre-position for cheerleaders before they take the floor
- The program tells you when class competitions happen — be ready

Cover Every Class

- Each class section will be called — be ready for each announcement
- Wide shot when the class is announced — their eruption is the shot
- Move between class sections during transitions to get each one
- Senior section is usually the loudest — give it extra attention

Floor Access Strategy

- Ask for floor access before the rally starts if possible
- Floor-level shots during performances elevate the quality dramatically
- Stay out of the performance area during active acts
- Move to the floor only during transitions — not during live performances

The Student MC

- The MC drives the energy of the entire rally — follow them
- Wide shot with the full gym behind them establishes scale
- Tight on their face when the crowd reacts to something they say
- The MC and a teacher interaction is often unexpectedly funny

Elevated Angle Value

- The bleacher or balcony angle shows the full gym scale and crowd density
- Overhead shot of a cheerleader pyramid or dance formation is compelling
- Shoot from the top of the bleachers looking down at the floor for wide formations
- Alternate between floor and elevated throughout the rally

Yearbook Coverage Goals

- Every performance group must appear — no group should be left out
- The student section is the visual center of the pep rally spread
- Class competition moment is the action anchor of the coverage
- Wide gym shot shows the scale of school spirit — include it

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

FLUORESCENT GYM

1/500-640s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Fluorescent WB • Burst

LED GYM

1/640-800s • f/2.8 • ISO 800-1600 • Auto WB • Burst

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Full student section — painted faces, signs, maximum energy
2. Cheerleader basket toss or pyramid on the gym floor
3. Sports team introduction — players running in to the crowd
4. Dance team formation — full squad in performance
5. Student MC at the microphone with crowd behind
6. Class competition at the peak winning moment
7. Individual spirit costume or face paint close-up
8. Teacher joining a student activity — crowd reacts
9. Wide gym shot — full scale of school spirit
10. Pep band in stands or on floor performing



Theater & Fine Arts

Photography Guide

Theater is storytelling through performance — every expression, costume, and lighting cue is part of the narrative. Capture the drama, the detail, and the people behind the curtain.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Lighting guide for this event

02

Position Guide

Best spots to cover this event

03

Shot Checklist

Every key moment covered

04

Pro Tips

Making the most of the occasion

Stage lighting is the biggest challenge — it changes color and intensity throughout the show. Use available stage lighting rather than flash — flash ruins the stage atmosphere and disrupts the performance.

— CAMERA SETTINGS

Main Stage Performance

Shutter Speed	1/250s – 1/400s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 6400
Focus Mode	Single AF
Drive Mode	Single Shot
White Balance	Manual / Tungsten
Metering	Spot Metering

Dark Stage or Dramatic Scenes

Shutter Speed	1/160s – 1/250s
Aperture	f/1.8 – f/2.8
ISO	3200 – 6400
Focus Mode	Single AF
Drive Mode	Single Shot
White Balance	Auto / Tungsten
Metering	Spot Metering

— LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

85mm f/1.4

- Best theater lens — maximum stage light
- Isolate individual performers beautifully
- Reach from orchestra pit or front rows
- Freeze expressions at slower shutter

70-200mm f/2.8

- Reach from back of house if needed
- Covers multiple performers in one frame
- Good for full stage ensemble scenes
- Versatile for chorus and group shots

35-50mm f/1.8

- Backstage candids in available light
- Curtain call and cast bow coverage
- Pre-show and green room moments
- Full stage wide shots from front row

Theater photography has two phases: the performance and the backstage story. Both are essential for complete coverage.

Performance Coverage

No flash during the performance — ever. Use available stage lighting only. ISO 6400 is acceptable to preserve the stage atmosphere over noise-free images. Focus on the performer who is speaking or most emotionally active. A singer at the peak emotional moment of a song is the signature theater yearbook image.

Backstage and Behind the Scenes

Pre-show costume and makeup preparation — get permission from the director first. Wing entrance: performer about to go on stage captures the anticipation moment. Costume changes and quick exits between scenes if access and space allows. Cast waiting in the wings watching the performance — the internal audience.

Curtain Call and Recognition

Cast bow at the final curtain is the appreciation moment — capture the full depth of the bow. Individual bows for lead performers — freeze the deepest moment of each bow. Director being called to the stage is a special honor — do not miss it. Flowers and recognition — the post-show parent and cast interaction.

Cast Portrait Session

Post-show cast photo on the stage with costumes and sets is the group image. Individual cast member portraits in full costume and makeup — while everyone is still dressed. Crew members who built the set and ran the show are often overlooked — document them. Director with the full cast on stage — the complete team.

Theater coverage requires advance permission from the director. Dress rehearsal access gives you the best photography opportunity.

PERFORMANCE

- ☐ Lead performer at emotional peak of a song or monologue
- ☐ Full cast scene — multiple performers and set visible
- ☐ Villain or antagonist at their most dramatic moment
- ☐ Physical comedy or action scene with visible props

BACKSTAGE

- ☐ Makeup and costume preparation — getting ready
- ☐ Cast in the wings watching — quiet anticipation
- ☐ Quick change between scenes if access is permitted
- ☐ Director watching from the house during the show

CURTAIN CALL

- ☐ Full cast bow — everyone on stage together
- ☐ Lead performer individual bow at the deepest moment
- ☐ Director brought to the stage for recognition
- ☐ Flowers being presented to performers

SETS AND ATMOSPHERE

- ☐ Set design detail — props and backdrop establishing the world
- ☐ House lights coming up at intermission — audience and environment
- ☐ Playbill or program close-up with the set visible in background
- ☐ Empty stage before the show — potential and anticipation

Attend Dress Rehearsal

- Dress rehearsal gives you full access without disrupting a live audience
- You can move freely, use different angles, and even ask to pause a scene
- Test your ISO settings at dress rehearsal so you are dialed in for opening night
- Build rapport with performers at dress rehearsal — they photograph better when comfortable

No Flash Ever

- Flash during a stage performance is disruptive to performers and the audience
- Stage lighting is designed and intentional — it is part of the story being told
- ISO 6400 with noise is far better than a flash-lit image with blown highlights
- Post-processing noise reduction is more effective than recovering blown stage lighting

Spot Meter the Face

- Stage lighting is contrasty — evaluative metering will expose for the dark stage not the performer
- Switch to spot metering and meter off the performer's face for correct exposure
- A well-exposed face with a darker background is the correct stage image
- Recheck exposure every time the lighting changes dramatically

Work the Wings

- The wings are where the real backstage story happens
- Performers waiting to go on are nervous, focused, and authentic — powerful images
- The moment an actor steps into the light from the darkness of the wings is cinematic
- Always ask permission from the director before entering backstage areas

Cast Portrait Strategy

- After the final curtain call is the best time for cast portraits — everyone is still in costume
- The full cast on stage with the set behind them is a unique annual image
- Individual portraits in costume are a yearbook staple — shoot them before everyone changes
- Include crew members — the people who built the world deserve recognition

Yearbook Coverage Goals

- Lead performer emotional moment is the headline image of the theater spread
- Full cast bow is the group image anchor
- Backstage preparation tells the behind-the-scenes story
- Set design detail shot establishes the visual world of the production

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

PERFORMANCE

1/250-400s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-6400 • Tungsten WB • Single Shot

DARK SCENES

1/160-250s • f/1.8-2.8 • ISO 3200-6400 • Auto WB • Single Shot

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Lead performer at emotional peak — expression and stage lighting

2. Full cast bow at final curtain call

3. Singer in powerful musical number — peak emotional moment

4. Full stage scene with set and multiple performers

5. Backstage makeup and costume preparation

6. Performer in the wings before entering — anticipation

7. Director brought to the stage for recognition

8. Individual performer portrait in full costume

9. Cast group photo on stage with sets and costumes

10. Flowers presented to performers — the celebration



HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

Band and Orchestra

Photography Guide

Band and orchestra concerts are disciplined performances where individual skill meets collective harmony. Document both the ensemble and the individual musician's story.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Lighting guide for this event

02

Position Guide

Best spots to cover this event

03

Shot Checklist

Every key moment covered

04

Pro Tips

Making the most of the occasion

Concert performances are under warm stage or auditorium lighting — similar challenges to theater. No flash during the performance. Test your ISO settings during sound check before the concert begins.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Auditorium Stage Lighting

Shutter Speed	1/200s – 1/320s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	1600 – 3200
Focus Mode	Single AF
Drive Mode	Single Shot
White Balance	Tungsten / 3200K
Metering	Center-Weighted

Dark Stage or Dramatic Lighting

Shutter Speed	1/160s – 1/250s
Aperture	f/1.8 – f/2.8
ISO	3200 – 6400
Focus Mode	Single AF
Drive Mode	Single Shot
White Balance	Auto / Tungsten
Metering	Spot Metering

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

70-200mm f/2.8

- Best range for most auditorium sizes
- Cover full ensemble and soloists
- Works for band and orchestra equally
- Versatile from house seats or pit

85mm f/1.4 or f/1.8

- Soloist portraits during performance
- Maximum light for dim staging
- Emotional expressions frozen clearly
- Best for dark or intimate performances

35-50mm f/1.8

- Full ensemble wide shot
- Conductor and ensemble context
- Bow and applause moments
- Post-concert candids and portraits

Concert photography tells two stories: the group performance and the individual musician. Capture both.

The Full Ensemble

Wide establishing shot of the entire ensemble in performance position is the anchor image. Conductor mid-gesture is the visual center of any ensemble shot — make it a priority. Capture the ensemble from slightly elevated if a balcony is available. The strings section, brass section, and woodwinds each deserve their own section shot.

Individual Musicians

A cellist at peak bow pressure on a dramatic passage captures technique and emotion. A trumpet player at full bell extension on a high note is a powerful individual image. Drummer mid-fill — sticks and expression captured in burst mode. First-chair violin soloist in a featured solo passage is a feature-worthy portrait.

The Conductor

The conductor is the visual center of every orchestra photograph. Baton at full extension on a climactic moment is the signature conductor image. Eyes closed in emotional connection with the music shows the depth of musical leadership. Conductor turning to the audience for applause after a piece.

Recognition and Applause

Full ensemble bow — everyone together after the final piece. Senior recognition night — seniors receiving flowers with parents on stage. Individual soloist bow after a featured performance. Director or teacher on stage with students at the end of the concert.

Concert coverage is best done at dress rehearsal for full access without disrupting a live performance.

FULL ENSEMBLE

- ☐ Wide shot: entire band or orchestra in performance
- ☐ Conductor mid-gesture at a climactic moment
- ☐ Section photo: strings, brass, woodwinds separately
- ☐ Ensemble in rest position between pieces — focus

SOLOISTS

- ☐ Solo performer at their most expressive moment
- ☐ Instrument close-up — bow on string, fingers on keys
- ☐ Face during a technically demanding passage
- ☐ Soloist bow after a featured piece

CONDUCTOR

- ☐ Baton at full extension on a fortissimo passage
- ☐ Eyes closed in deep musical connection
- ☐ Conducting profile — arms wide, ensemble behind
- ☐ Post-concert moment with the students

APPLAUSE AND RECOGNITION

- ☐ Full ensemble bow — everyone on stage together
- ☐ Senior night flowers and family on stage
- ☐ Audience standing ovation from the house
- ☐ Backstage congratulations after the concert

No Flash Ever

- Flash during a concert is disruptive to performers and the audience
- Concert lighting is designed and intentional — trust it and expose for it
- ISO 3200 with a sharp subject is better than a flash-ruined concert atmosphere
- RAW files give you extensive recovery latitude for warm concert color casts

Spot Meter the Conductor

- The conductor is often more brightly lit than the ensemble behind them
- Spot meter off the conductor's hands or face for correct exposure on the key subject
- When shooting ensemble-wide, switch to evaluative and expose for the full group
- Recheck exposure at every major lighting change in the program

Attend the Dress Rehearsal

- Dress rehearsal gives you full access — move around, try different angles
- Test your ISO and white balance under the actual auditorium lights
- Ask the director which pieces have the most dramatic moments to prioritize
- Build comfort with the performers before the high-stakes live performance

Work the Sections

- Each instrument section has its own visual character and photographic personality
- The string section bowing in unison is visually rhythmic and beautiful
- Brass at full bell extension on a fortissimo chord is dramatically powerful
- Percussion mid-fill captures the kinetic energy of the ensemble

The Conductor Story

- Build a mini photo essay of the conductor from arrival to final bow
- Pre-concert: reviewing the score or speaking with section leaders
- During: maximum gesture at the climax of the most challenging piece
- After: the human moment of relief and pride at the standing ovation

Yearbook Coverage Goals

- Conductor gesture shot is the headline image of the music section
- Full ensemble is the group photo anchor
- Individual musician portrait adds human depth to the section
- Senior recognition night images are treasured by families for decades

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

WARM STAGE LIGHTS

1/200-320s • f/2.8 • ISO 1600-3200 • Tungsten WB • Single Shot

DARK STAGING

1/160-250s • f/1.8-2.8 • ISO 3200-6400 • Auto WB • Single Shot

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Conductor baton at full extension on a climactic moment

2. Full ensemble — entire band or orchestra in performance

3. Soloist at emotional peak of a featured passage

4. Cellist or violinist — bow at full pressure on the strings

5. Full ensemble bow after the final piece

6. Senior night — flowers and family on stage

7. Trumpet or brass at full bell extension on a high note

8. Conductor eyes closed in musical connection

9. Drummer mid-fill — sticks and expression captured

10. Director with students post-concert — the celebration



HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

Spirit Week

Photography Guide

Spirit Week is five days of creativity, silliness, and school pride.
Each themed day produces unique photo opportunities.
Document every theme and every student who goes all in.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01

Camera Settings

Lighting guide for this event

02

Position Guide

Best spots to cover this event

03

Shot Checklist

Every key moment covered

04

Pro Tips

Making the most of the occasion

Spirit Week is shot outdoors during school hours in excellent natural lighting throughout. The creative challenge is the costumes and themes. Look for the most creative interpretations each day.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Outdoor Natural Light

Shutter Speed	1/500s – 1/800s
Aperture	f/2.8 – f/4
ISO	200 – 400
Focus Mode	Single AF
Drive Mode	Single / Burst
White Balance	Daylight / Auto
Metering	Evaluative

Indoor or Overcast

Shutter Speed	1/250s – 1/500s
Aperture	f/2.8
ISO	400 – 800
Focus Mode	Single AF
Drive Mode	Single Shot
White Balance	Cloudy / Auto
Metering	Evaluative

LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

35-50mm f/1.8

- Best for spirit week portraits
- Natural perspective for costumes
- Candid hallway and lunch coverage
- Environmental context with school

85mm f/1.8

- Clean background for costume isolation
- Beautiful natural light portraits
- Feature shots of top costumes
- Flattering for individual portraits

24mm f/1.8

- Wide group shots in the hallway
- Full costume with school as backdrop
- Large group theme day photos
- Environmental storytelling shots

Spirit Week gives you five themed days — each deserves its own dedicated coverage.

Theme Day Coverage

Find the most creative interpretation of each day — they make the best photos. Document the full range: elaborate full-costume to casual participation. A group of friends who coordinated their theme together is always a great shot. A teacher or administrator who dressed up is unexpected and delightful — always photograph them.

Hallways and Candid

Hallway traffic in costume during passing period tells the spirit week story better than anything else. Students reacting to each other's costumes — genuine surprise and laughter are the best expressions. Decorated lockers or themed classroom doors add visual interest to the coverage. Lunch period in costume — more relaxed and candid energy than the hallways.

Class Competition

If classes are competing for spirit points, the scoring and standings are part of the story. Document the class with the most visible spirit each day — show their enthusiasm collectively. The final spirit week reveal or winner announcement is a ceremony worth covering. The spirit stick or trophy passing between classes is a great visual tradition.

School Spirit Details

School colors worn creatively across all five days show the range of participation. Faculty versus student spirit comparison — who goes harder is a fun story to tell. Senior class versus freshman — the culture of class spirit competition. Spirit week promotional banner or poster — school branding and identity.

Spirit week is a five-day photo essay assignment — plan dedicated coverage for each day.

THEME DAY COSTUMES

- ☐ Best costume for the theme of the day
- ☐ Group who coordinated their costumes together
- ☐ The student who committed hardest to the theme
- ☐ Teacher who participated — always photograph this

HALLWAY MOMENTS

- ☐ Passing period in full costume — width and energy
- ☐ Two friends seeing each other's costumes — reaction
- ☐ Student explaining their costume to a classmate
- ☐ Before and after: fresh morning versus tired afternoon

CLASS COMPETITION

- ☐ Score reveal or class competition results
- ☐ Class chanting or cheering their spirit total
- ☐ Spirit week emcee announcing the daily winner
- ☐ Spirit stick or trophy passing ceremony

DAILY RECAP

- ☐ End-of-day best costume if school announces one
- ☐ Teacher choice or admin favorite of the day
- ☐ Representative shot from each of the five days
- ☐ Senior class spirit week photo — their last one

Build a Five-Day Essay

- Treat spirit week as a five-day photo essay — not five separate days
- Each day should have a hero shot, a group shot, and a candid
- By Friday you want to tell the full arc of spirit week in 10-15 images
- The payoff is a spread that shows the entire week unfolding day by day

Find the Best Costume

- Walk every hallway in the first 15 minutes of each day to survey the costumes
- The most creative costume is your feature portrait for that day
- Ask the student to pose briefly in a spot with good light
- Photograph them in context — in the hallway, at their locker, in the classroom

Candid is Better Than Posed

- Spirit week candids are more authentic than posed spirit week photos
- Photograph students before they know the camera is pointed at them
- The genuine laugh when two friends see each other's costumes is priceless
- Follow a group of well-dressed students for 10 minutes — you will get 20 great shots

Document Every Class

- Each class year should be represented in each day's coverage
- Freshman participation is often underrepresented — seek them out
- Senior class often has the highest participation — but do not only shoot seniors
- A freshman who went all in on a theme is a compelling unexpected image

Shoot the Teachers

- Teachers who participate in spirit week are a visual gift
- They are often hilarious, creative, and genuinely enthusiastic
- A teacher in full costume teaching class is a great in-context shot
- Faculty spirit participation tells the story of school culture

Yearbook Coverage Goals

- Every day of the week should have at least one representative image
- The most elaborate costume of the week is the section headline image
- Class competition results are the action story of spirit week
- A five-day grid or timeline layout is a natural yearbook spread structure

Print this page and keep it in your camera bag.

OUTDOOR / NATURAL LIGHT

1/500-800s • f/2.8-4 • ISO 200-400 • Daylight WB • Single/Burst

INDOOR / OVERCAST

1/250-500s • f/2.8 • ISO 400-800 • Auto WB • Single Shot

TOP 10 SHOTS

1. Most elaborate costume of the week — full commitment
2. Group who coordinated their theme costumes together
3. Teacher who dressed up — always the crowd favorite
4. Hallway passing period in full costume — scale of spirit
5. Two friends reacting to each other's costumes
6. Class competition moment — who wins the spirit crown
7. Senior class on their last spirit week together
8. School colors day — red and school color everywhere
9. Five-theme daily hero shots — one per day of the week
10. Spirit week winner announcement and celebration