

TIMELY TIPS

Curriculum

From the Sidelines: A Guide to Dynamic Winter Sports Photography

OBJECTIVE

Students will refine their understanding of composition and learn the best practices for positioning themselves in fields, courts and gyms to capture dynamic and compelling winter sports photos.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cameras (or smartphones with camera features)
- [Sample sports photos](#) showcasing strong composition
- [Diagrams](#) of sports fields, courts and gyms
- Whiteboard/markers or shared butcher paper
- Sports action figures or props for mock setups

PART 1

INTRODUCTION

Briefly review the importance of composition in sports photography (e.g., creating impactful, storytelling images).

Show a few examples of great winter sports photos and discuss what makes their composition effective (e.g., leading lines, rule of thirds, framing, depth).

PART 2

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY PLACEMENT

Display diagrams of a basketball court, soccer field and gym layout.

Discuss key areas where photographers can position themselves to capture the best angles:

- Baseline or sidelines for basketball.
- Near goalposts or midfield for soccer or hockey.
- Elevated angles in a gym to capture crowd and team dynamics.

Highlight safety concerns and staying out of the way of players and officials.

PART 3

COMPOSITION TECHNIQUES (15 MINUTES)

Discuss the following composition tips:

- **Rule of Thirds:** A basic tenet of composition is the rule of thirds, which is: "Divide the frame into thirds both horizontally and vertically. The subject goes at the intersection of any two lines." It's like placing a tic-tac-toe drawing on top of an image. The goal is simple: to keep the subject out of the center of the frame. This generates tension, energy and interest in the image.
- **Leading Lines:** A technique that uses the lines in one part of a photograph to lead the viewer into another part of the image.
- **Framing:** A composition technique in which the center of visual interest in a photo is framed by objects in the foreground that are usually out of focus; lends depth.

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PART 4

MOCK POSITIONING ACTIVITY

Set up the classroom as a simulated gym or court. Use sports action figures or props to represent players. Your students will need a camera of their own. Cell phones can work for this activity to ensure all students have the ability to practice. If possible, you can bring your students to the gym or field.

Have students practice moving around to experiment with different positions. You can use other students in your class to simulate, if possible. You can also use props to simulate athletes.

- Baseline for capturing a basketball player going for a layup.
- Near midfield to frame multiple players in action.
- Elevated angle to capture a team huddle.
- Encourage students to experiment with framing, angles and perspectives.

PART 5

PEER CRITIQUE AND FEEDBACK

Students share their practice shots with a partner or small group. Each group identifies strengths and suggests one improvement for each shot.

PART 5

CLOSING

Recap key takeaways:

- Always prioritize safety when positioning yourself.
- Be aware of the game flow and anticipate key moments.
- Use composition techniques to tell a story with your photos.
- Ask each student to write down one area they'll focus on improving at their next winter sports event.