

“THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUTH SPORTS SHOOT” Version 3.0

OUTDOOR SHOOT

These instructions are based on a Nikon D700 and Godox TT600 flash but apply to most cameras and flash systems.

DO NOT EVER BE LATE TO A SHOOT WHICH IS A SURE DEAL KILLER DUE TO THE STRESS CAUSED!

SETTINGS

1. Put your camera on Manual mode and Autofocus. No special settings at all. In fact, reset your camera if you are unsure, most cameras have a reset all settings menu item that erases special settings.
2. Set your flash zoom to 50mm on the Godox TT600.
3. Set your camera to 100 ISO and **never change it.**
4. Set your camera to 200 or 250th of a second depending on our max sync speed. D7000 DOES 250th.
5. Set your white balance to daylight. Do not change it outdoors.
6. Set your F stop to F8 and **do not change it for individual photos.**
7. Put a memory card in your camera and **FORMAT IT.**
8. Set your camera to Large JPEG fine quality or raw.
9. If the **sun is lighting your background or hitting the child, always shoot at max sync 200 or 250th on D7000.**
 - a. Set your GODOX TT600 flash power to ¼-.07 power on the Godox OR ¼ on most other less powerful flashes. F8 for individual photos where you are 7-8 feet back. Test your flash today but you SHOULD HAVE PRACTICED THIS AND ALREADY KNOW WHAT WORKS WITH YOUR FLASH and just do that.
 - b. If sun is anywhere in the photo (trees, grass, subject, sky, anywhere) you will be at 200th or 250th.
10. **THE ONLY SETTING YOU ADJUST IS THE SHUTTER!** If your background is dark WITH NO SUN anywhere impacting the photo, you can use a slower shutter than 200th or **250th but never below 1/80th**
11. Use a shoe mounted flash. Do not mount flash on tripod or stand outdoors. There is no reason to do this and it often leads to shadows and areas on the subject with no fill flash. A flash on a radio slave can fail to fire, be too high or too low.
12. Do not add equipment, special lights, second flashes outdoors!
13. Do not shoot in to the sun if at all possible, that easily leads to flares.
14. Try to avoid trash cans, people and cars in photos. Pictures are two dimensional. That red car 500 feet away looks 5 inches away in a two dimensional photo.
15. All individual photos are VERTICAL team photos are HORIZONTAL. Buddy photos are vertical if 4 or less people.

GET READY

16. Attach your **lens shade** and be sure the sun is NOT HITTING YOUR LENS or you will get flares!
17. Take a photo of the background. If the sun is out, this photo will be fine. We need a **nice photo of the background to start your shoot.**
18. Set up shade for the subjects. Canopy or scrim. Try to shoot in the shade always, full shade not half and half.
19. Put a marker on the ground for the child and ensure that you are 7-8 feet back. **All individual photos are done at 50mm on your lens EYE LEVEL. A fixed 50mm prime lens is great!**
20. Put a cone right next to you for the kids who are waiting to line up on! Put the cone close, saves time!
21. Stay 7-8 feet back all day. If you are using a fixed 50 that means maybe the T-ball kids will be full length and older kids will be knees up, THAT IS OK! We adjust the crop in the lab.

WHEN THE KIDS COME

DEMONSTRATE DON'T DICTATE: FRAME IT! HALF TAP ALWAYS TO FOCUS. EYE LEVEL

22. Start taking individual photos asap, you do not need to “wait for the whole team to be ready” to start a shoot.
23. When your first team comes up for individual photos go through this process in instructing a whole team at once and line them up very close to the marker where they stand.

- a. Demonstrate pose always but don't dictate if they want a different one. "Tuck in shirts" stand on mark. Free hand on hip, not dangling. No dead fish! NEVER TOUCH THE KIDS. Demonstrate to all kids and tell them what to do all together, don't instruct one kid at a time which is a big time waste.
- b. Ask coach or parent to help to keep kids posing and organized. NEVER TOUCH THE KIDS. NEVER.
- c. **Frame it.** HEAD IS IN THE UPPER THIRD with about 6-8 inches over the head and see down to just below the knee. Frame it means to set up the subject in the viewfinder and "see the four corners" of the image. See a little loose (extra space) to the final print. We can crop in but we can't crop out. Amateur photographers have "conversations" through the lens and point it at the nose of the child, photographers who know what they are doing first "frame" the image, then look at the subject.
- d. **Half Tap to focus.** Say "eyes open smile." Press. **COMMAND ATTENTION** but don't yell and don't tell kids to say anything. Just say "LOOK HERE, ONE TWO EYES OPEN SMILE"
- e. You should be shooting **eye level to the kids** which means you need to kneel sometimes and bend.
- f. Adjust subject to hide stuff like cars in the background (use kids body to hide junk).
- g. Ask the team if there are buddy shots. If you do a buddy shot and you need to back up a little because you are using a fixed lens, then increase the flash power a little. Not a lot. When kids are in buddy photos MAKE SURE they also take their individual photo. They think they are "done" as they don't know Mom ordered an individual photo too. Ask!

24. BUDDY PHOTO SETTINGS:

- a. If you have a zoom, you can use it to zoom back and stay in the same spot at the same flash power as with individual photos.
- b. If you have a fixed 50mm you need to back up and increase flash power, maybe to ¼+.03 on the Godox. IT IS OK to take a couple shots for buddy photos at different flash power settings (bracketing) if you are unsure, we know buddy photos can vary a lot. Most buddy photos are taken vertically.

25. SLATING INSTRUCTIONS (SPECIAL NOTES ON MAKE UPS, LATE, OR EARLY KIDS)

- a. We have a video on slating but simply start every team with a picture of the team envelope and number the envelopes as you shoot with a number and your initials. RS1 RS2 etc.
- b. Slate every child with their order form with the section in which they are ordering an item circled with a black marker BEFORE you take their individual photos.
- c. Do not blow out slates by moving closer with flash on. We can zoom in to see slates, just have the child hold it in front of their chest and take a nice photo of the child holding it.
- d. Do not take photos of slates on the ground, we need to see faces.
- e. Do not slate kids after their photos, slates are done before the photo.
- f. Start every team photo with team envelope in front UNLESS you take the team photo on the same camera right after or before the individuals, then you don't need to also slate it as long as you slated the first child with the team envelope.
- g. Slate late or early kids normally but write LATE or EARLY on their form and put in in their correct team envelope IF THEIR TEAM IS COMING OR CAME ON THS SAME DAY but if they came or will come on a different day that is called a MAKE UP.
- h. If a child is a MAKE UP from a team that came on a prior day OR will come on a future day, make sure their form is complete and put that child's form in a TEAM ENVELOPE labeled "MAKE UPS" and you can put all the make-up children in that envelope for the whole day.

TEAM PHOTOS

26. Team photos Instructions: Rule of 8 to block the most background and fill up the photo with people.

- a. Change your flash to full power for teams. You can take one picture at **F8 and one at F6.3** on the Godox TT6000 from about 18 feet at **50mm**. Remember, if sun is anywhere you must be at 200 or 250th (max sync). If you are shooting a very large team take like football one at F5.6 too but remember.
- b. Have a string or pole or marker on the ground for efficiency in posing but remove it for the photo.

- c. Tell team to line up tallest to shortest. **8 tallest in the back SHOULDER TO SHOULDER NO GAPS.** Unless kids are very small, coaches line up next to kids, not behind kids. Next 8 go down on both knees **up tall.** Next 8 criss-cross applesauce. So, 24 kids before you need to go wider than 8 back 8 kneel 8 criss cross.
- d. For large football groups, you might want to invest in step stools for a 4th row of 8.
- e. Do not go wider than 8 people until you **MUST** and have three rows including the criss-cross applesauce row. Crop a little loose. We zoom in but we can't zoom out. There should be an even amount of space over the heads and in front of the people and **DO NOT** put props in front of the kids (bats, balls) as we will cover those with the caption banner so it is pointless.
- f. Do not hide anyone! Coaches stand next to kids not behind (except for little t-Ballers maybe)!
- g. If you use a bench, shortest kids sit on the bench (ABOUT 5 KIDS). Tallest stand in back always.
- h. Take team photos from a kneeling position to be **eye level with kneeling row not the standing row!** This blocks the most background, especially cars!
- i. **Banners take the place of 4 tall subjects in the middle** and coaches hold it up high AND TIGHT!
- j. **Do not get glare on banners** (take photos from different angles, but hold banner tight and taught.)
- k. Tell all kids "hands behind backs" in team photos. **HANDS BEHIND BACKS EVERYONE! NO GAPS! SHOULDER TO SHOULDER.**

27. DO NOT DO ANY OF THESE THINGS

- a. Do not shoot below 1/80th.
- b. Do not make micro adjustments all day because "histogram something something."
- c. Do not take more than 3 photos of a child unless you really can't get them to pay attention. Tell the child "look here, 123 smile" and never tell the child to say a word. Two shots is probably enough.
- d. **DO NOT Overshoot your flash recycle, wait 10 seconds between individual shots and 20 seconds between team shots on full power.**
- e. Fail to stake and sandbag canopies and sandbag and stake all legs of stands.
- f. **DO NOT** Use canopies in high wind. If the canopy is shaking take it down.
- g. Sacrifice the photo of the child to get a cool background object in the photo. If a coordinator tells you "we want our scoreboard" tell them "parents want good photos of the child" and try to avoid this and tell the coordinator, we get a lot of complaints when we focus on background objects and not children. **NEVER NEVER NEVER ALLOW THE SUN TO HIT YOUR LENS!!! AVOID SUN FLARES!**
- h. Even if you have to ask someone to shade your lens. **Never allow sun to hit lens.**
- i. Use new untested equipment on a shoot
- j. Forget to change your flash back to ¼ power after doing a team or buddy photo at a higher setting
- k. Make promises about delivery or anything unless you are the owner "cal the owner"
- l. **DO NOT** Forget to change your batteries if the flash is not recycling.

19. A couple notes:

- a. **Tell kids to take reflective stickers off of hats.** Tell kids to tuck in shirts when you have them lined up.
- b. **Use hands to show relationships in buddy photos** and use props. Heads in a buddy photos should fit in an oval. Only shoot horizontal if you have 5 or more people in the photo for buddy photos.
- c. **Change angles to avoid cars** in photos or use children's bodies to block the cars. Watch out for trash cans and bathrooms. Nobody wants junk in the background.

INDOOR SHOOTS: DIGITAL BACKGROUNDS

We almost always use digital backgrounds nowadays so do not worry about shadows on the wall or background but avoid shadows on kids!!!!!!! Since children are extracted you focus on the exposure on the child.

1. Set white balance to flash indoors all other settings indoors are the same as outdoors except you can stay at max sync always. 200th works always.
2. Set up a solid colored background. Have subjects about 5 feet away **from the background.**
3. For team photos a shoe mounted flash is fine! Shadows fall behind kids. For individual photos a shoe mounted flash in combination with a slaved flash is fine too if we are using digital backgrounds. We have a video on using two Godox TT600 together with one mounted on a light stand in S1 (slave mode). Please, watch this video.

4. Using studio lights? Know what you are doing and set them up to avoid creating shadows in team photos that land on people-the infamous double shadow problem is horrible to deal with! You are better off not using studio lights than using them wrong. A shoe flash set properly is better than umbrella studio lights set up incorrectly.
5. If you use studio lights, it is really helpful if you take a back up team photo on a separate camera with a shoe mounted flash so we will have a photo that certainly does not have double shadows.
6. If kids or adults are wearing hats, tilt them back! Make sure flash or umbrella is below the brim of the hat in a straight line and ideally below the chin! Light does not turn corners. Lights set up wrong create shadows.
7. Your flash is they only light source indoors. Make sure you are 7-8 feet back on individuals and 18 feet back on groups to give the light room to spread out. Note: if you must stand closer due to space limitations, turn flash power down.
8. **Take one team photo at F8 and one at F 5.6** just like outdoors but be at about 40-50 mm for most teams. You need to be back at least 15-18 feet to let the light have room to spread out. There is no ambient light indoors! If you stand too close to a team, you will blow out the kid in front and the coach in the back on the side will be dark. So be at 40-50mm on your lens and that will put you back about 15-18 feet on most teams which is a good distance.
9. Individuals always same as outdoors. Whatever setting worked outdoors works indoors using the same equipment.

CHECK OUT THE BOOK OF BAD PHOTOS: We will email you this book for reference on request.

Every bad photo in the BOOK OF BAD PHOTOS fails one of these instructions.