

# Sports & Action Photography — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into reps you can run at real games. Each section maps to a course module: you will dial in your camera, plan your sideline position, drill your shooting timing, and build a fast cull-and-deliver routine. Fill the templates as you go so that by your third or fourth game you have a repeatable, deadline-proof system.

## Camera Setup for Moving Subjects

Lock in the autofocus, exposure, and button configuration you will use at every game so setup is a one-dial decision.

### Worksheet: My Sports Camera Configuration

Fill this in for your specific body, then save it to a custom mode slot (C1/U1/mode 1). Bring this sheet to your first three games until the settings are memory.

Camera body and lens

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AF mode (AF-C / AI Servo)

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AF area mode default (Wide / Zone / Single)

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Subject detection on/off (Human / Animal)

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Back-button focus: assigned button

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Shutter button AF: disabled? (yes/no)

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Drive mode (high-speed burst fps)

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Auto ISO ceiling

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Saved to custom mode slot (which one)

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### Exercise: Keeper-Rate AF Drill

Have someone jog toward you on a path. Shoot 5 short bursts in each AF mode below, then review at 100 percent zoom and count eyes-sharp frames. Use this to choose your default.

- Wide-area tracking: how many eyes-sharp frames out of the burst?

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- Single-point: how many eyes-sharp frames out of the burst?

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- Which mode gave the higher keeper rate, and in what situation would you switch?
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- At what jogging-to-running speed did your keeper rate start to drop?
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### Checklist: Pre-Game Camera Check

- Battery charged and a spare in the bag
- Two formatted, fast memory cards (UHS-II or CFexpress)
- AF set to AF-C / AI Servo, not single-shot
- Subject detection enabled if the body supports it
- Back-button focus confirmed working (focus only on rear button)
- Auto ISO ceiling set to my tested noise limit
- Sports configuration saved to and recalled from a custom mode slot
- Lens cleaned and stabilization set correctly

## Reading the Game and Sideline Craft

Plan access, light, and position before kickoff so you are aimed at the action with clean backgrounds.

### Worksheet: Pre-Game Scout Sheet

Complete this on arrival, before play starts. Walk the venue, note the sun, and plan two or three positions. Sport and venue

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Credential / permission obtained from (name, role)

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Field rules (flash allowed? zones? no-go areas)

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Sun direction now and where it will move

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Primary shooting position (and why faces are lit there)

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Backup position for the other end / second half

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Cleanest available background from each position

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Focal length / lens for this venue distance

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### Exercise: Light and Background Test Frames

Before the game, shoot a few test frames of any person on the field from your planned positions. Evaluate light and background, then adjust your plan.

- Is the light on the subject's face or behind them? What needs to change?
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- From a low, kneeling position, how much does the background clean up versus standing?
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- At f/2.8 to f/4, is the background blurred enough to isolate the subject?
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- Which of your scouted positions gives the best combination of light, faces, and clean background?
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## Checklist: Sideline Conduct and Safety

- Wearing neutral clothing, not team colors
- Staying behind painted lines and out of officials' paths
- Moving only during stoppages, never across live action near me
- Sun behind me whenever the action allows
- Aware of play direction so I am pointed where the action goes
- Monopod or handheld choice matches lens weight and mobility
- Introduced myself to nearest official / event staff

## Capturing the Decisive Moment

Drill burst discipline, panning, and low-light exposure so your shooting craft holds up under real conditions.

## Worksheet: Sport-by-Sport Settings Card

Fill a row for each sport you shoot. Build this from the course numbers and refine it with your own results so you can dial settings in seconds.

Sport

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Shutter speed (freeze)

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Aperture

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Typical ISO range (this venue)

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Frame rate (fps)

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AF area mode for this sport

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Key moment to pre-aim for

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## Exercise: Panning Progression Drill

Pick a moving subject (cyclist, runner, car). Shoot 10 frames at each shutter speed below, tracking and following through. Record your keeper rate at each.

- 1/250s: keepers out of 10 and how the background blur looked

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- 1/125s: keepers out of 10 and any change in sharpness on the subject

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- 1/60s: keepers out of 10 and whether the streaking improved the sense of speed

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- What changed in your stance or follow-through that raised your keeper rate?

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## Exercise: Burst Timing Self-Review

During a practice or game, deliberately shoot short bursts of 4 to 8 frames at peaks. Afterward, review and answer honestly.

- Did your bursts start just before the peak or after you saw it?

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- How many bursts captured the true peak versus missing it between frames?

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- Did your buffer ever fill at a bad moment? What would you change?

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- Find one moment where a single well-timed frame would have beaten a long burst.
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### Checklist: Indoor / Night Shooting Setup

- Aperture opened to widest usable value (around f/2.8)
- Shutter at the minimum that still freezes this sport
- Auto ISO allowed to rise; ceiling set to my tested limit
- Anti-flicker / flicker-reduction mode enabled
- Mechanical shutter chosen if electronic shows banding
- Shooting RAW for white-balance and noise latitude
- Confirmed whether flash is permitted before relying on ambient

### Cull, Edit, and Deliver

Build the post-game routine that gets a tight, consistent, captioned set to the client on deadline.

### Worksheet: Post-Game Delivery Plan

Agree and record these with the client before the game, then use it as your delivery checklist after.  
Client / outlet

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Number of final images promised

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Resolution and format required

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Delivery deadline (date and time)

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Delivery method (gallery / transfer / mobile)

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Caption and credit format required

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Licensing / usage agreed (personal, editorial, commercial)

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### Exercise: Two-Pass Cull Timed Run

After a shoot, run the course's two-pass cull and time yourself. The goal is speed without second-guessing.

- Total frames shot and minutes spent on pass one (rejects)?

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- How many survivors remained, and how many made the final shortlist?

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- Does your shortlist cover action, both teams, emotion, and a wide scene-setter?

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- Where did you slow down or hesitate, and how will you speed that up next time?

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### Worksheet: Edit Consistency Recipe

Record the develop steps you sync across a set for each lighting condition, so your edits stay consistent and fast.

Lighting condition (daylight / overcast / indoor)

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White balance approach (Kelvin or as-shot)

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Highlight recovery amount

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Contrast / clarity settings

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Noise reduction (luminance) amount

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Output sharpening amount

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Default crop / aspect ratio for this client

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### Checklist: Delivery-Ready Final Check

- Final selects narrowed to the agreed count
- Each frame checked sharp at 100 percent on a calibrated screen
- Develop settings synced for consistency across the set
- Captions, player names, and credit embedded in metadata
- Files exported to the required resolution and format
- Delivered via the agreed channel before the deadline
- Strongest 1 to 3 frames flagged for my portfolio

### Your Action Plan

1. Build your sports camera configuration and save it to a custom mode slot, then confirm back-button focus works.
2. Run the keeper-rate AF drill with a jogging subject and choose your default AF area mode.
3. Fill the sport-by-sport settings card using the course numbers as starting points.
4. Scout and shoot a low-stakes local or youth game: complete the pre-game scout sheet on arrival.
5. Practice the panning progression drill until your keeper rate at 1/125s is reliable.
6. Shoot a full game using short, intentional bursts and complete the burst timing self-review afterward.
7. Run a timed two-pass cull on that game and narrow to 20 to 60 keepers.
8. Apply your edit consistency recipe and sync it across the set for one cohesive look.
9. Deliver a captioned set through a gallery or transfer before a self-imposed deadline.
10. Review your keeper rate and timing, pick one weakness, and target it at the next game.









