

TOPG July Assignment – “SPORTS!” by John Grusd

The assignment for July, “Sports”, covers a huge spectrum of activities and I’m leaving it up to you to decide what applies. I will help you out with some examples to get you started: Team sports like Football, Baseball, Hockey and Basketball would certainly apply. Individual sports like Skateboarding, Snow Sports, Swimming, and Surfing (and on and on) would also be appropriate. Paragliding, Golf, Bowling, Frisbee, they’re all sports. Motorsports, Track and Field, Chess and Poker qualify. You get the idea. Even “implied” sports like kids playing tag will be OK. In these times when we are staying close to home and not able to be in large groups to photograph new material, I’m leaving it wide open to your interpretation. I won’t be questioning the subject matter unless it’s obviously off topic.



There are other approaches as well. Your image can be editorial in nature. If you decide that a great way to depict Baseball, for example, is a well-lit, beautifully composed still life of a ball, glove and a bat, then do it! If you want to montage or collage a group of thematic images together like my friend Master Photographer, Michael Collins does (at right), then give that a try. If you want to heavily process an image to distill it down to a certain illustrated emotion, then have at it! As long as there is an implication of sports, you’re good to go!

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I will be looking for a moment or “story” that exemplifies the activity. It could be a moment of supreme action. It could be a moment of tension or anticipation. It could be a winner’s exaltation or a loser’s despair. It might be Cartier-Bresson’s famous, “decisive moment”. It could be the joy of the activity itself. It can be a close or intimate image. It can be a wide shot to include an entire team or field. It might simply be symbolic of the sport. Even an image of a crowd reaction can be a powerful sporting statement.

Technically, I’ll be looking for a compelling composition with its intention on the story you are telling. This is not photojournalism. You can edit distractions out. Focus will be of utmost importance. Make sure your subject is tack sharp! Depth of field is your decision but try to make it the most effective choice for your image.



Note: I realize that shooting fast action can require a high ISO resulting in grain. Consistent grain is not a problem as long as it's not distracting. I will look closely at the technical aspects listed above but will not count off for grain. Other corruptions like banding are not acceptable.



Mainly, have fun with this! Push yourself and the emotion of the moment. Shoot a lot of images and pick the best one. If possible, don't be satisfied with choosing from just one image. Give yourself some latitude. Smile when you are photographing! You'll have more fun! Remember that the assignment's intent is to push us all to photograph in ways that are new or unfamiliar. Take some chances and get some feedback. It makes us all better photographers!



Good luck everybody!



Baseball Montage Copyright 2020 Michael Collins Photography

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