

Photographing Football

By Jordan Tovin

Woodward Academy Phoenix, College Park, GA, USA

Table of Contents

Preparation	3
Settings	4
Etiquette	5
Offense	6
Defense	7
The Atmosphere	8

Preparation

- To prepare to photograph football, ensure that you have all of the [necessary equipment](#).
- Make sure you research the weather conditions to prepare accordingly. Keep in mind the amount of time you will be spending outside, so dress accordingly.
- To make sure you are allowed inside the facility, contact the necessary people ahead of time by emailing ([email template here](#)) them or speaking to them in person.
- Make sure you have transportation to and from the game. Often, students can stay after school if the game is being played there, but they forget about getting a ride home. If you can not drive, make sure you ask a friend (either on the team, on the marching band, or just in attendance) or a parent.
- Prepare to arrive an hour before the game begins. Pregame warm-ups are important too!
- Make sure your camera works well. Getting there before the game starts allows you to set your camera to the desired settings (look at next slide).

Settings

- Your shutter speed should not drop below 1/500 of a second. To make sure this doesn't happen, keep your aperture as wide as possible ($<f/4.5$).
- While many professional photographers shoot on manual, when shooting Friday Night Football, the light is constantly changing unlike that of a professional stadium that is lit for TV. Shooting on **Aperture Priority** (AP on Canon and A on Nikon) will allow the camera to automatically change the shutter speed based on the lighting conditions.
- Make sure you monitor your ISO throughout the night. As the shutter speed with decrease, the ISO will increase to allow for more sensitivity. Try not to let your ISO exceed 10,000.
- In terms of autofocus, making sure AI Tracking is turned on because you are tracking moving subjects. If you do not know what I am talking about, look up how to change your camera's autofocus settings.
- Do not be afraid to utilize your camera's high fps (frames per second) rate to capture the perfect moment, but don't hold your shutter release button down for several seconds. At that point, you are just shooting video.
- Make sure your white balance is in auto. White balance can be easily fixed in post-production afterwards, so do not worry if your pictures look warm or cold.

Etiquette

- First and foremost, remember wherever you are at the game, you are a journalist, not a cheerleader. It is not your job to cheer—try to be professional
- Make sure you stay out of the way of the following people: trainers, coaches, players (even if they're hurt or benched), and referees.
- Check with your athletic director to see where you are allowed to photograph. Sometimes, you can go on the field, and other times, you will be limited to the stands like everyone else.
- Don't have a yard sale on the sidelines. If you take a knee to photograph a drive or a play, ensure that none of your equipment is on the field (that's how you lose lens caps).
- Stay safe by being aware of your surroundings. projectiles + inattentive people = injuries

Offense

- When photographing offense, you want to be in front of the action. If your team is on the 13 yard line in the red zone (area that surrounds the other team's endzone), make sure you are on the other side of the endzone.
- Try to photograph a variety of players. Be cognizant of who is getting the ball often so you can avoid photographing the same players.
- Photograph people in different positions. Remember someone can be throwing the ball, catching the ball, running with the ball, blocking, or something else.
- Get to the game early while the teams are doing offensive drills to practice shooting offense.



Defense

- Many people think that the only way to photograph a game is by photographing the offense, when in reality, this is far from the truth. As a journalist, you want to capture the full story.
- Like offense, you want to be in front of your defense.
- With the right lens, getting good pictures of a defender's facial expression can make a great shot.
- Getting low is another key tip for getting good defensive pictures. Being low to the ground makes the players seem larger and more impressive.
- ALWAYS BE READY- Interceptions are not as uncommon as you might think. Always be ready with your camera to capture the moment the ball may be intercepted. Meanwhile, be cognizant of your storage as by photographing this way can chew through your storage and battery much faster.

The Atmosphere

- Remember, the football game is not the only thing happening.
- During the football game, the marching band is playing, color guard is marching and presenting the flags (if your school has that), the fans are cheering, and the cheerleaders are cheering.
- It's difficult to manage your time, but it's a good idea to try to capture all aspects of the game.
- Remember to change your settings based on where you photograph—not everywhere is as well-lit as the field.