

# Contact Sheet

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## Sports Photography

Drive past any park or ball diamond or tennis court in our community. Look at all of the driveways with their basketball poles. You see kids shooting hoops, riding skateboards, playing ball with each other. Idaho Falls, for the most part, is a community of active people and with activity comes sports. We love doing things, outdoors, indoors, on the ski hill, walking on the bike paths, etc. Therefore, we have many parents who are willing to take their kids to organized sporting activities.

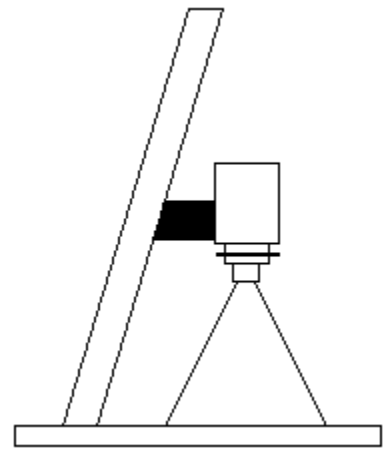
And this is where **Melvin Cook** has found his niche in photography. He has always enjoyed sports, but he noticed that not many of the parents had cameras that would really capture the action on the fields. Melvin feels that you **must have a SLR camera** to capture sports action. Pressing the shutter and getting several frames per second is the only way you will get the event on film - - or your digital chip. If you have tried your point and shoot camera at a game, you realize quickly that the delay from when you push the shutter and the picture is taken by the camera just won't work for the quick action demanded by sports.

For most kids in the first few years of organized sporting activities, Melvin uses 1/250 of a second for his shutter speed. This stops all of their motion plus the ball movement. By the time they are teenagers, you have to

increase the speed to 1/320 second to get stop action. When selling these images to the parents, he has found that the images where the ball is in the picture seem to sell a lot more than other photos.

Besides a fast shutter speed, Melvin emphasized that he likes a shallow depth of field (usually around f/2.8). This throws the background out of focus so that the player is the main ingredient in the photo. But you still have to be aware of the background so that a blurry telephone pole isn't sticking out of the fielder's head! He has found that he likes to include some of the surrounding area so that he can crop later so that the person is going into the middle of the picture. Too tight of an image means you may cut off a leg, arm, bat, etc. making the image useless for sale. Also, the image will sell better if you can see the full body - - or at least all of the jersey number if you have to get action from behind the player.

Since all of this action is happening so quickly, you must know the game well if you want to capture any images. When doing a baseball game and you know a player is capable of stealing second since the catcher doesn't have a good arm, **prefocus** your camera on second base so that all you have to do is fire off a couple of frames when that action occurs. Prefocus on home plate when there is a person tagging up on third base and trying to make it home on a short sacrifice fly ball.



When doing outdoor sports, you will have to keep checking your exposure quite frequently since a cloud passing overhead can make a two f/stop difference in your exposure latitude. If you are not sure at times, check your histogram since it will always give you the correct information better than what you saw through your viewfinder. Human eyes compensate for all sorts of abnormal lighting instantly, and our brains just convert that information. Films, or digital chips, need the light at certain levels to work properly. Have the sun behind you if at all possible.

Indoor sports photography brings a completely new set of problems to the equation. Yes, the light is bright enough for our human eyes to see easily; but that film/computer chip problem rears its ugly head again. Instead of 100 ISO setting used outdoors, Melvin has found that he has to go to a 1600 speed setting to stop the action. Also, most gyms in this area use a light source that makes most things turn out with a greenish cast if you just choose "auto white balance" as your camera setting. He holds an EXPO disc over the lens, takes a reading, and then uses this as a custom white balance setting. He only has to do this at the beginning of the session since the light will remain the same for the rest of the game. You **must not** use flash photography since this will usually get you thrown out of the game. (Imagine trying to shoot a free throw when you just looked right at a flash unit blast you in your eyes.)

Melvin uses a tripod for most of his images and has found that a monopod just doesn't work for him. He uses a panning head so that he can follow the action and keep the field level most of the time. Melvin has found that one of the best times to take some of

these action images is during warm ups. For the most part he will shoot about 600 images at a sporting event and uses primarily JPEG since this is processed by the memory chip faster than RAW files. But, he is brutal in the evaluation of the images. Look at the background carefully. Find the ones that show emotion. Delete any embarrassing images. Yes, these are the ones we see weekly on "America's Funniest Videos"; but if you want to continue doing this type of photography in a community the size of Idaho Falls, word of mouth will quickly eliminate your business.

But if he is just doing portraits of the players, he will shoot in RAW. He will have backup memory chips, batteries to ensure the complete shoot. He also gets the coach's permission to take the photographs of the players before he starts shooting.

Since Melvin does not know the families and the players on the various sports teams he shoots, he will approach one of the parents before the game and give him his card with a listing of the cost of the images. That one set of parents gets a special deal on the photographs of his/her child. But that one parent is your salesman and can get the other parents to sign up for prints. By this technique, Melvin has sold enough images to buy all of his photographic equipment in the three years he has been doing sports photography.

Melvin stressed that you will spend numerous hours at many of these events, spend many hours selecting your images, but the rewards are there. But you are enjoying a sporting event - - and doing photography at the same time. Thanks for giving us an insight in your niche, Melvin.

## Club Notes

**Because our scheduled meeting would interfere with the Fourth of July (we would be meeting on the evening of July 3 and we were afraid that many people would already be leaving the city for an extended weekend), please keep checking the website since the August Show and Sale information will be most current at that location. If you have questions, Roger Heng, our Webmaster, should be able to channel the question to the right person and get that information back to you quickly. (Those of you who have lived in Idaho Falls for many years know of our standard two weather season's joke, "Winter and then our summer, the Fourth of July!" - - so enjoy the Fourth!)**

**At the last meeting in June, we voted to have the rates of \$45 for members, \$60 for non-members for a booth space. There was concern about the Cadet Program being shut down and losing our security patrols, but we have used the Bonneville County Sheriff's Department Cadet Program which was not affected by the city police program's change of status.**

**Special thanks to Farr's Jewelry for the use of the digital projector at the last Advancement Program. This makes our learning much more enjoyable!**

The members who check our web site frequently know that Roger has found several links to websites that have free tutorial sections for PhotoShop. He continues to get our site linked to more sites so that your images on the EIPS site have a larger audience. The web site is

upgraded frequently. Roger is going to have a page for each club member where they will have nine of their images along with a short blurb about the member. We need fresh images on your pages for new visitors.

## Advancement Program

The theme of the Advancement Program for July is: **Sports**. Please bring three of your best images, slides, digital image files and join us at 1900 Grandview in the Conference Room at 7:30 p.m. on July 17. It is amazing how your – and our – photography improves as we share these images with one another.

If you bring images from the original list of themes, I will still give you credit for them since several of the actual topics have been changed. Our main concern is to keep that camera in your hand taking pictures. This is the way you are going to improve the quickest.

## FIELD TRIPS

We had several members go to the air show in Rexburg while others went to the snowmobile races across Jenson's Grove in Blackfoot. We await those images in the Advancement Program.

**For this month, join us at the Fourth of July fireworks celebration. Remember to use a bulb release and get several shots in one frame (I loosely hold my lens cap over my lens between shots to keep out spare light. Watch the takeoff trail of the next burst to move the cap out of the way).**

## Monthly Meeting

**Date: July 3, 2008**

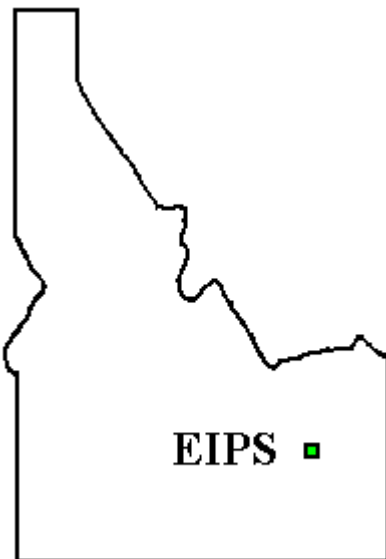
**Time: None**

**Location: None**

### **Program:**

At the last meeting of EIPS, we voted to cancel the July meeting due to the conflict with the Fourth of July the next day. Many members were headed out of town and felt they would not be able to come. So, enjoy the Fourth. Keep updated by the website!

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Membership Info:  
Web address: [www.eips.net](http://www.eips.net)



## Graffiti

EIPS is a group of amateur and professional photographers who have joined together to further the art and craft of photography. Please join us and expand your horizons. Sharing knowledge makes all participants better at their craft. We meet on the first Thursday of each month for our educational lecture. Then the third Thursday is our Advancement Program where we share some of the images we have done. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in the 1900 Grandview Ave conference room. We all become better photographers!

**Summer is short but very special in Idaho. Keep taking those pictures - - and then share them with us at the club meetings.**

