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Guidelines for Photographers

All images and experience levels:

1. Camera should produce at least a 3 mega-pixel image. No cell phone cameras.
2. Your photograph should illustrate the text in the story.
3. Avoid photographing flags, mirrors, pictures, awards, windows, doorways, and people that may distract from the photograph subject or are difficult to crop out.
4. Do not email images to us unless requested.
5. Do not embed images in Word or other word processing/text files. We cannot use these images.
6. Burn images to a CD and return to us quickly; we may require additional images to publish.

Stop action sequences and general shots:

Consumer grade point and shoot (non-SLR) cameras are OK for final print images less than 3x5 inches.

Sparring, live action sequences & other shots:

1. Horizontal orientation, used to illustrate the story.
2. Head shots, use an 85 to 200 mm focal length lens on SLR digital cameras to minimize enlargement of nose, etc.
3. Up to ISO 200 OK with consumer (non-SLR) digital cameras. ISO 400 to 800 OK with CMOS imager of EOS class or similar low noise SLR digital camera.
4. JPEG (large) at lowest compression (fine). Optional RAW for SLR cameras.

Cover shot:

See advanced amateur or professional cover shots.

Amateur photographer with consumer point & shoot (non-SLR) camera:

1. Use automatic, best quality settings.
2. Take pictures in a well lit room to minimize out of focus shots.
3. Pre-focus. Press the shutter button half-way to focus, hold until you are ready to take the shot, then fully depress.
4. Close, wide angle shots generally produce better pictures and flash results, than distant telephoto shots.
5. Photograph a gray or white card. We will use this to adjust color balance.

Advanced amateur with SLR digital camera:

1. Use manual aperture and manual exposure. Program or automatic camera settings are designed to maximize exposure and flash performance, but at the expense of aperture and shutter speed and sometimes ISO speed. As a result, as the depth of field becomes smaller, parts of the object of interest are out of focus. In addition, when the shutter speed is too slow, image blurring due camera shake and/or subject motion is more likely.
2. We prefer ISO 100-200 images, ISO 400-800 are acceptable for non-cover shots using low noise SLR cameras.
3. Use an external flash when possible, as it produces better results and has a much longer range than an integral camera flash.
4. Photograph at least one gray card for each lighting setup, to confirm color balance. A white card may be substituted, providing it is not overexposed.

Advanced amateur or professional cover shots (1-7 are top priority):

1. SLR digital camera or scanned negative from a medium format film camera.
2. Vertical, three quarter & full subject shots.
3. Custom white balance.
4. Maximum manual aperture, f/5.6, typically f/8 to f/13. Higher than f/13 starts to degrade image sharpness on small pixel SLR digital cameras.
5. Manual shutter, 1/30 to 1/60 or faster for indoor ambient light with fill flash. For strobes, use 1/160-1/400 sec, but less than max. camera sync speed.
6. Confirm and advise the color space used, such as Adobe RGB or sRGB, as some cameras do not record this.
7. ISO 200 or lower.

8. EOS class or equivalent digital SLR- set to RAW + highest resolution JPEG (large) at lowest compression (fine). Include RAW, if possible.
9. Below f/5.6, assure adequate depth of field to achieve entire subject focus.
10. Use a high quality 70-200 mm, f/2.8 lens (or 24-70, f/2.8 in confined spaces). Optical IS (image stabilization) is highly recommended when shutter speed is less than the reciprocal of the focal length.
11. Neutral (light to medium dark color) background or wall with minimal/ removed pictures, awards, etc.
12. Minimal to no patterned background to improve subject extraction from background.
13. Meter to expose shadows without blowing highlights.
14. White uniforms typically have a maximum RGB value around 230, 230, 230.
15. Relatively flat lighting, strobes with medium softboxes or large brollies.
16. Key light mounted high to minimize shadows behind the subject.
17. Fill light mounted as required to adequately expose faces, etc.
18. Background strobes, as required.
19. Photograph at least one gray card for each lighting setup, to confirm color balance. A white card may be substituted, providing it is not overexposed.
20. Shoot one image containing a Macbeth Color Checker card or equivalent.

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