

Photographing Action Indoors

*Tips and Techniques from The Louisiana Photographic Society
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These are tips and lessons learned from a field trip in which LPS was allowed to photograph a fencing club at practice sessions. Because this was not competition, we were allowed to use flash except when the fencers put on their masks. These tips should be useful when photographing other indoor activities:

1. Tripod probably not useful.
2. Camera tips
 - a. aperture priority with large aperture (small f-stop number) to blur background
 - b. auto focus but probably best to “pre-focus” to avoid shutter lag
3. Lens tips
 - a. probably moderate telephoto to isolate the subject
 - b. bring a “fast” lens (small f-stop number)
4. Exposure tips
 - a. use external flash if possible
 - b. use a fast shutter speed to “freeze” action but
 - c. ... try slow speed to get a “motion blur” effect.
5. Film tips
 - a. high speed film
 - b. use tungsten (indoor) type color film or
 - c. with daylight type film use tungsten filter (80B)
6. Digital tips
 - a. set highest resolution
 - b. use “Raw” mode if at all possible or
 - c. bring a neutral target and set a custom white balance or
 - d. ... set white balance for tungsten (or fluorescent as appropriate) or
 - e. ... set white balance to Automatic
 - f. set high ISO speed
 - g. check the histogram for proper exposure
7. Lighting tips
 - a. this probably will be mixed color lighting
 - b. electronic flash is permitted
 - c. try shots with and without flash
 - d. check your flash maximum synchronization speed for your camera
 - e. check your camera shutter speed setting for aperture priority with flash
 - f. if possible, set flash for “second curtain” synchronization
8. Composition tips
 - a. vary the position of the camera (high, low, etc) and flash
 - b. be aware of the background – watch for clutter