

STANLEY LEARY

People & Location Photographer

Anatomy of a Sports Photography Assignment

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Give Stanley a call for your next project at 770.998.3504 or email him at stanley@stanleyleary.com.

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Anatomy of a Sports Photography Assignment

(Editor's note: this was originally posted on Rising Black Star blog <http://rising.blackstar.com>.)

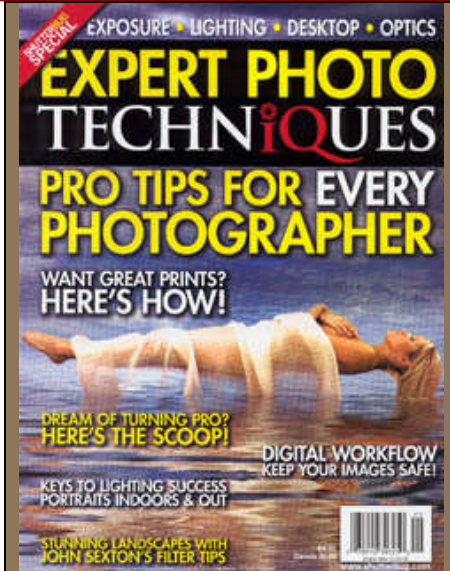


Oct 20, 2007; Atlanta, GA, USA; Georgia Tech quarterback Taylor Bennett (13) looks for receivers downfield against Army during the 3rd quarter at Bobby Dodd Stadium. Georgia Tech defeated Army 34-10.

Last week, I covered Georgia Tech's victory over Army in Atlanta. Here are a few of my photos from the game, along with some thoughts on my approach to shooting the assignment.

First, when covering a football game, I like to stand behind the end zone so the team I'm focusing on is facing me. That way, I am already where they are trying to go.

There are two types of photos you can get of a team from this vantage point -- defense and offense. The great thing is you can see the players' faces, which for me is very important.



Shutterbug Magazine's 2007 *Annual Expert Photo Techniques* issue is on the stands and on pages 64-66 there is a feature on me. You can read it [here](#).

Today, databases require the captions to be written so the software can pick keywords from the caption so that editors can find the photos. One thing to remember, for example, is to list both teams in the caption. This way, the editor knows which game the photo is from. It is common for editors to search for a few photos and then put them in a folder, and well-written captions help them with the necessary information.

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In this photo, for example, Army quarterback Carson Williams (16) hands off to running back Patrick Mealy (29) during the 1st quarter. What I like in the photo is that you can see Williams' face.

In sports with a ball, I am typically looking for three things: (1) peak action, (2) the ball and (3) competition. Sometimes you can't get all three in a picture, but if one element stands out, the photo will still work.



In this photo, Georgia Tech quarterback Josh Nesbitt (9) keeps on designed run and heads up the middle of the field for 11 yard gain against Army. You can feel the competition where the quarterback is dragging the defensive player in this photo.

After one team is ahead in a game, I often begin to focus on the other team to see if there is a play that changes the whole game. When the game is close, this can happen at any moment. With a blowout, the latter part of the game is harder to cover since not much will happen to change the outcome of the game.

After you shoot a game, it's



Here's a caption for the photo above, for example:

Oct 20, 2007; Atlanta, GA, USA; Georgia Tech FB Mike Cox (40) finds some running room for 12 yards against Army in the 3rd quarter before being tackled by Army defensive back Jordan Murray (19) at Bobby Dodd Stadium.

Getting a great moment in the camera is only part of the story; it is the caption that fills in the rest.

A final note about the picture above; like all of these, it's taken with 240-600mm, which helps get the photographer close to the action as well as drop out the background. It communicates all three elements: He's carrying the ball, it contains peak action, and you can sense the competitive pressure he probably feels from the defensive players tackling him.

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Vindigo
Virginia Commonwealth University
Volleyball Magazine
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Woodward Academy
World Council Of Churches
World Journalism Institute
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important not to editorialize in your captions -- but to provide concise descriptions of what's taken place. Concise, but chock-full of information.



Oct 20, 2007; Atlanta, GA, USA; Georgia Tech running back Tashard Choice (22) hurts his ankle during this play where he is tackled by Army defensive end Brandon Thompson (95) during first quarter at Bobby Dodd Stadium.

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