



Hurdles duel

Photographing Athletes

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The Photojournalism Division is very active and members are invited to participate in the division. Please see the December 2007 PSA Journal, page 6 for information.

Athletics is a discipline that offers photographers an immense spectrum of possibilities especially for track and field photography; whose participants are focused during every facet of the sport, and who show the excitement specifically in their facial expressions during and after each event; **these are the most interesting photographic moments.** The easiest way to photograph this sport is actually at smaller local competitions, and generally speaking, the head umpire's authorization suffices to be able to access all areas. For approximately three years this author has carried out photographic tasks for the Flemish athletics league, resulting in official admission to several championship competitions in Belgium and affording the prospect of sharing the results of experience and opportunity in various track and field events.

The Sprint

Since these competitions are very short the athletes remain close to each other during the race and the strong competition aspect can best be shot at the finish line. Therefore, preference is given

to a higher point of view to avoid all unpleasant elements in the background and make use of an 80-200mm lens with 1/1000 shutter speed, insuring that the truly decisive moment of the race is sharply photographed. Possibly, the start of the sprint also gives good possibilities if one is located on the side of the track and shoots slightly sideward.

Medium Distances

The 400 meter (m), for instance, can be seen as a very long sprint. The advantage of this distance is that one can photograph both the start and the finish. The 800 and 1500m frequently are tactical competitions where the outcome of the race is almost always decided at the end, when several athletes come together at the finish. Therefore, take up position some 10m behind the finish line equipped with an 80-200mm zoom in order to capture the final rush of the athletes.

Long Distances

The long distance competitions are the 5000m and 10,000m as well as the steeplechase. At these races



BK - Veerle



Sanex jump

photograph with a 300mm lens and choose the first or last turn at 5 and 10 km. In the steeple chase the water box offers the most beautiful shooting. Use a position about 20m behind the water box, and choose a low point of view in order to be able to optimally capture the splashing water as well as the athletes.

Long Jump

The best shots can be made during the jump where the long-jumper stretches both arms and legs to the front to preserve sufficient speed, and during the landing in the sand box, where splashing sand can give an extra dimension to the picture. In both cases one can photograph sideward or frontally and depending on the chosen point of view, the pictures will look different. The position behind the sand box is preferable to photograph the athletes frontally with a 300mm lens and a shutter speed of 1/1000, which will sharply reflect all facets. Strive to have the features of the athletes prominent in the picture.

High Jump

In this discipline, the *Fosbury flop*—where the high jumpers leap backwards over the lath—is the commonly used technique. Of course the best place to photograph the flop is behind the lath. One should choose the ideal position depending on the way the jumpers hold their heads. Attentively follow the athletes during the warm-up and make notes to insure taking the ideal point of view for each athlete. The best shooting moment is the



Filip

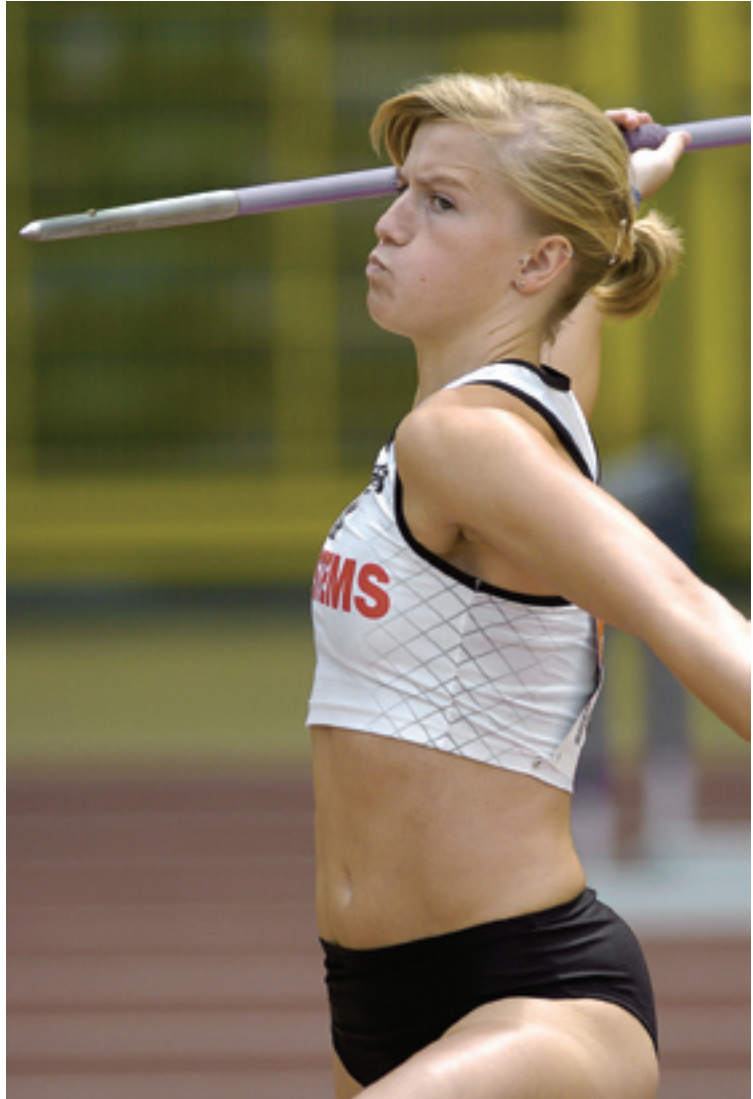


Sky high

instant that the athlete floats in his ultimate effort over the lath. For that reason, manually adjust the 300mm lens sharply on the lath and push the release button when the jumper comes over it.

Pole Vault

There are three ideal moments to photograph this



At a glance



Photos © Luc Dequick, EPSA

Final 100m W



Karen



Luc Dequick, EPSA

discipline: during the run-up where the jumper depicts strength and concentration in the short sprint; and during the fly off where the jumper pulls all his energy together to rise with a bowed leaping-pole. For those stand behind the mat where the athletes come down. The third moment is when the athlete has exceeded the lath and falls down with stretched arms and legs. The best position for these shots is behind the athletes at the run-up strip, using a 300mm lens.

Hammer and Discus Throw

During these disciplines the throwers are placed in a cage-like apparatus, which serves as security for the public should the hammer or discus be released too soon. A first but dangerous possibility to photograph this is through the darns of the cage

with a wide-angle lens. Secondly, you can go forward to a safe distance outside the throw-area. Of course one needs a telephoto-lens. The best moment to push off is when the thrower releases the hammer or discus.

Shot Put

The shot put is easy to photograph because you have several possibilities to choose a good point of view: photograph the features of the putter (but then one must take notes in advance to know which hand will push the ball away); or the moment when the ball is released. It's always important to have the ball in the picture to create drama. To this purpose, it is best to take place along or behind the throw area. Your eventual point of view will determine the choice of the lens to be used.

Javelin Throw

This is a discipline which offers several opportunities to shoot great pictures—the concentrated run-up of the athlete, the moment when the thrower stands on the verge of heaving the javelin and just when the javelin has left the hand of the sportsman. The ideal point of view is exactly along the side-line outside the throw area and depending on whether the thrower is left or right-handed one will need to change position. The pictures can be taken with 80-200mm zoom as well as a 300mm lens.

Hopefully, these concise statements full of tips taken from this photographer's own experience



K-systems throw



André leading

will offer sufficient insight in athletics in order to photograph this splendid sport with an opportunity for successful pictures. ■



Steeple 549



Hannelore