

# Hockey Photography . . .

## *How One Pro Does It*

By Bruce Bennett

**T**hose FLYER Magazine covers that adorn your wall may look good, but wouldn't shooting those covers yourself be even better?

Sometimes the difference between the pros and the amateurs (besides the fact that the pros don't pay to get into the games) is the better shooting location. At the Spectrum though, many fans have better shooting positions than the "hired guns". Aside from two downstairs positions at holes in the glass, the newspaper photographers must shoot from the back of the press box or from the penalty box.

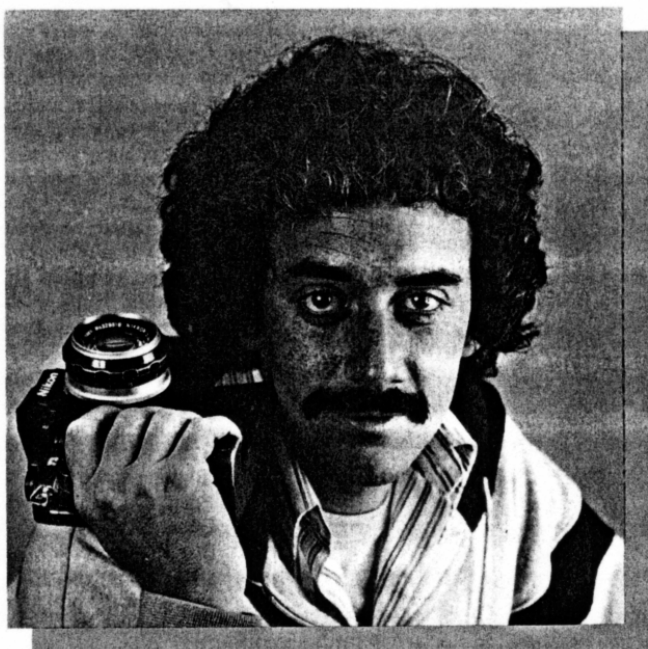
From the first few rows in the stands a 135mm lens is sufficient for capturing your favorite players on film, whereas a 200mm is fine for most of the lower level. For higher elevations a 300mm or 400mm lens is recommended. If you're behind the glass watch for reflections — especially from those wearing light colored clothing.

In the equipment area, most pros use Nikon or Canon with fast motor drives — four to six frames per second. Lens preference appears to be the 180mm/2.8, 300mm/2.8 and the 400mm/3.5. There's a lot of glass in those lenses, so most photographers rely on monopods to hold them steady.

There's a threesome of film choices — black and white, color slides, and color negative. For b/w the choice is TRI-X ASA 400 film, push-processed to ASA 1600. This enables you to use the 'stopping-power' of a 1/500th second at f/4.5. Color negative films that are usually used include Fujicolor or Konica 1600. Kodak's 1000 ASA film has been deemed too grainy and unsharp.

Color slide shooting at the Spectrum presents several problems; although the arena is well lit, the color balance of the lights is towards the blue/green side. A 30M (.30 Magenta) filter will help, but you will lose one-half stop of light. Without a filter try ASA400 Fujichrome or Ektachrome at 1/250th second, f/2.8. The results of pushing the slide films are less than spectacular. The slides will be muddy and grainy, but if your lens won't open enough to shoot at f/2.8, or if you want to freeze the action a little better, pushing is a must. Never shoot lower than 1/250th second, as

### **If you're a photography buff, here's a few helpful hints on how you can get better photos from your Spectrum seat.**



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legs, arms and skates will be blurred.

By the way, the flash units that attach to the top of the camera are not powerful enough to have any effect on your pictures. If you're behind the glass you'll only get reflections, and if you're up higher the flash will reach the back of other fans heads, and very little else.

In this day of high-tech toys, automated cameras have led the way, but not in ice hockey photography. You can have varying success with an autofocus system such as the Minolta Maxxum, but you'll be plagued by officials or players cutting in front of the player you're aiming at, and this will throw the lens out of focus.

Auto exposure cameras bring in very definite problems. Depending on your seat location the bright white ice can throw your exposure

off by up to 200 percent. The higher the angle you shoot from the further away from the proper exposure you will be. If you were to take a meter reading off just the white ice, you could then open your exposure 1½ to 2 f/stops. This will get you closer to the proper exposure.

If your camera only works on auto-exposure here's a trick to fool the camera. Let's assume you choose an ASA 1600 film. Set normally at ASA 1600, the meter sees all the white ice in the frame, and closes the lens or shutter speed down. The result is underexposed film. If you change your ASA dial to 800, you will automatically pick up 100 percent more exposure.

If your film choice is negative, and the negatives are still "thin" with little detail, you should change the ASA dial to 600 (½ stop more light reaches the film) or 400 ASA (1

stop more). Once you get the light reading that works for you, stick the camera into manual and concentrate on focusing!

The Flyers as well as most sports publications require color submissions to be in slide form, so I use "strobe lighting." Large power packs with flashtubes are placed up in the catwalks of the Spectrum and are triggered by remote control. When I press the camera button, a signal is instantly sent to the four lights overhead which flash in sync with the cameras' shutter. Because of their position, high and overhead, there is no problem with reflection off the glass or players complaining about their brightness.

Usually I sit at a hole in the corner for two periods to get the Flyers on attack, and in the penalty box the third period. The advantage of the penalty box is that I can shoot both ends of the ice so I don't miss anything. From the corner I'll use a 135mm lens for power plays and more general action horizontals like those seen in the Flyers calendar. Most often though, I use a Nikkor 180mm for tight shots of individual players.

Faces are more important than sticks and pucks and often tell the story of a game better. This approach differs from that of the news photographer who looks to shoot the puck bulging the net.

From the penalty box I use a 300mm f/4.5 for b/w, and a 300mm f/2.8 for color. Black and white film is shot with a Nikon F3 and a motor that can shoot up to six frames per second.

Black and white film is shot at 1600 ASA, 1/500th at f/4.5 and processed in my own lab with Edwal FG-7 and Sodium Sulfit. Many of the newspapers still use Acufine to develop their film.

For color photography I use the four overhead strobes — All 2400 watt second units that are triggered with a radio remote that syncs with my Nikon FE-2. Although I overpower the Spectrums' lights by 300 percent, few people notice the lights as the flash lasts less than 1/2000th of a second, and recycle in just under three seconds. When shooting this seems like an eternity as a player can score, celebrate and be back at the bench in the wink of an eye — or two flashes of the strobes! Film choice is Fujichrome 100 ASA which is shot at the cameras' sync speed, 1/250th, at f/4. 