



How to SHOOT HOCKEY

By BRUCE BENNETT

It Takes More Than Just An Expensive Camera To Capture The Spirit Of The Thing

So you thought you would be a shooting star, and you ended up just fizzling? Usually that's the first reaction from anyone who shoots hockey images.

The sport that features players moving at high speed in erratic patterns, played in an arena that usually is short on light, is the recipe for a photographic disaster.

Yet, today's modern digital cameras are capable of capturing very acceptable images under a wide range of limited lighting conditions. And that's the intensity of lightning as well as situations involving the wacky color balance you will encounter in many amateur rinks.

An intimate knowledge of the sport is the first key towards being successful at photographing any sport. But then, the other pieces of the puzzle are 'instinct' and 'experience.' And by experience, I mean that for most photographers, the more you

shoot, the better you'll get. Add to those a healthy dash of patience.

Until such time as they invent invisible referees and players, you will just have to deal with them cutting in front of your winning shot. Stay focused (pun intended) and wait. There is no benefit to holding the button down for multiple shots of the backs of players. There will be a clearing at some point in time, and that's when you can win your Pulitzer.

Remain calm and composed, even though your kid just scored a big goal...or some bigger kid is banging him into the boards.

EQUIPMENT

Let's cover the basics of the equipment you will need to get started. Most professional photographers use Canon or Nikon cameras and there is a wide range of affordable camera bodies leading up to the top-of-the-line \$6800 models.

For starters, choose a camera that is capable

of going up to 5000 ISO. That will allow you to shoot in even the darkest of rinks.

The next piece of the puzzle is a fast lens. Most pros use a combination of lenses, with the most popular being a 70-200mm f/2.8, and a 300mm f/2.8.

The 300 f/2.8 is simply unaffordable for all but the upper echelon of pros, but keep in mind that in a decently lit facility, a 300mm f/4 works well and that lens is lighter in both weight...and in cost.

But, the 70-200 would be the lens you would lean on most of the time anyway. With that lens, from the corner of the rink or from the 'high boards' (around the top of the faceoff circle) you would be able to shoot action in that zone, or roughly one third of the ice. Anything further away and the players would be too small in the frame. The 70-200, or lenses of similar focal length, is made by Canon and Nikon as well as some independent lens manufacturers such as Tamron. Shop around.