

High School Football (Night)

By Heather Reinhart

We often hear in the world of digital photography that it isn't the equipment but rather the photographer that makes the image. There is a whole lot of truth to this statement, but up to a point. Sensor quality is a big factor in low light.

Lenses the pros use: (1)

Main camera, night game: **400mm f/2.8** (to keep ISO lower)

2nd Body: **70-200mm f/2.8** and/or **24-70mm f/2.8**

Settings:

Use your ISO range and know what it is for your camera. Just because it goes to 64,000 ISO doesn't mean those photos would be usable. Too much grain. Practice by shooting photos at different ISOs at home and know what your true range is. (4, 8)

Auto ISO is also an option if your camera has this setting.

Aperture of f/2.8 is a must.

Stopping fast action occurs around 1/1000 of a second. 1/800 may also do the trick, but you need to be able to get enough light in. Lowering that number will allow more light, but won't stop the action. This is the balancing act you need to play.

Monopod. It's more for eliminating the weight than stability since you'll be moving. Mount it to the lens ring.

Shoot in high-speed continuous mode (burst mode) and use it. Hold down the shutter if something great is happening! (11, 12)

If you're shooting at fast shutter speeds, your Image Stabilization should be turned off.

Also use AI Servo (Continuous Focus Mode on Canon bodies) for your focus mode. It'll continue to focus on the center when a subject is running toward you. (10)

I shoot in Manual, or in Aperture Priority with the f/2.8 locked in if there are lots of dead spots on the field.

Other tips:

Find the bright spots on the field. Shoot more when the action is in these areas.
Find the dark spots – avoid those.

Look for options for “still” photos of people. The coach or players watching from the sideline. The huddle, players at the line before the ball is snapped. (9)

Staying ahead of the action will allow you to get facial expressions and the eyes of the players. They always tell the story! (5, 2)

Be aware of your surroundings! Don't get hit by players going out of bounds or celebrating. They aren't looking out for you.

Get low. Think about it. When you watch NFL on tv they are kneeling on the sidelines or one knee in the endzone. (20)

Follow the ball. (3, 6)

Sometimes you get lucky! (7)

Sources:

<https://improvephotography.com/42047/tips-night-sports-photography-processing/>

<https://scottkelby.com/camera-settings-shooting-football/>