



SIDELINE SHOOTING TIPS FOR COACHES VIDEO

The purpose of sideline video is to capture footage of all 22 players on each play so that coaches and recruiters can evaluate player performance. We have consulted several NFL video directors to put together a step-by-step description of how you should shoot each of your games. We start with the set-up process, zooming and panning and the importance of a white balance before actually shooting the game. By following this step-by-step approach you will improve the quality of your game films, which will help the players and coaches evaluate performance and prepare for the next opponent.

Setting Up

Before the game starts the camera operator should set up as close to the 50 yard line as possible and make sure the tripod is stable and the shot is balanced. By balanced we simply mean when looking through the lens make sure the playing surface is flat. You don't want to deliver footage of a game that looks like it is being played up or down a hill. Also, when setting up make sure the camera operator avoids the crowd from getting into the shot. Higher elevations, like the roof of the press box – if available, are ideal for keeping the shots from being obstructed.

Zooming and Panning

The camera operator, if inexperienced, should also practice zooming and panning in and out during warm ups. Being smooth with the zoom is important; it will help avoid jerky motions that make play evaluation more difficult. If you have problems zooming gradually during warm ups then only zoom at the end of each play to show the jersey numbers clearly.

Focus and Exposure

As far as focus and exposure, this really depends on what type of camera you are shooting. Many of the newer cameras have auto focus, but that is not always the best option in shooting games. If the camera has manual focus, you should use that at all times. Sometimes auto focus will not lock during pan, tilt, and zoom. When using manual focus try zooming in to the farthest point you will be shooting, set the focus, and the camera should track just fine. If your camera has an infinity focus that would likely be the best option. Make sure that you check the focus periodically during the game. Adjustments can be made during time outs, or change of possessions.

White Balance

Most new cameras are also auto exposure but you need to make sure that you are using the right filter for the time of day that you are shooting. This can be



checked by looking in the owner's manual of the camera. To make sure you have the right colors in the picture the camera operator may have to do what is called a white balance. This is usually done with a button on the camera marked "white balance." You can adjust your white balance by zooming in on something white on the field, like a jersey, shirt or referee's pants, and pressing the button. A lot of times it's just as easy to white balance on the team wearing white jerseys on the field. If the light changes numerous times during afternoon games (sun to overcast to dusk), white balance should be performed at every opportunity (timeouts, dead balls, change of possession) with the lens zoomed in on the huddle of the team wearing white jerseys.

When to Start and Stop

The camera operator needs to be careful not to start shooting each play too early or stay with it too long. They should begin shooting when the players are on the line of scrimmage, not when they break the huddle. Pay attention to the quarterback, as they get set the play is about to begin. As soon as the end of the play is defined, either with a tackle or score, the shot should end. Do not take shots of crowd reaction. It will simply add unnecessary time to the footage.

Down and Distance

Depending on the scoreboard or sideline markers at the stadium, the video person should shoot some frame of reference between each play. In other words, if the scoreboard can stay up with the action, shoot the down and distance before the start of each play. If the scoreboard either doesn't have or cannot keep up with the down and distance, then shoot the sideline chains, showing what down it is, and wide enough to know the distance. Unless in a no-huddle or hurry-up mode the camera operator should hold the scoreboard or chains shot for two seconds to help set up each play. At the beginning of each series, the camera operator should also show the score and time remaining to give the coaches an idea of the game situation (two minute or four minute drills). This is an important element to the evaluation process.

Shooting the Game

At the start of each play all 22 players on the field need to be seen through in the camera's frame. As the play progresses (either run or pass) the camera operator should follow the action without getting too wide, or too tight. Keep as many of the players involved in the play in your camera's view. In other words, don't shoot the game like a TV camera would. You want to avoid the close ups and isolations that we are all used to seeing on television.

Pass Plays

For example, on pass plays coaches need to be able to see the quarterback and wide receivers as long as possible. The video person should keep as many of the 22 players in the shot until the play has decidedly switched to involving

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fewer players. That would happen on a long pass play or breakaway run. If that does happen the video operator needs to be careful not to zoom in too tight on the ball carrier. Coaches want to see what other players are doing away from the ball – are they executing assignments or blocking down field?

Running Plays

On running plays the camera operator needs to start a little wide just in case of a play action pass. Once you can tell it's a run, zoom in closer on the action until the player is tackled. Again, be careful not to get too close and eliminate players from the footage.

Special Teams

Shooting special teams, specifically kickoff and punt returns, is a little different shot than a typical play from scrimmage. When shooting kickoffs the camera operator should start with the two front lines in the frame and then zoom to a wide shot once the ball is kicked with the receiver in the picture prior to the catch. The same rules apply for punts. Start on the line of scrimmage with the gunners/jammers and punter in the frame and once the ball is punted zoom wide to include the returner prior to him catching the ball.