

*Master Guide for* **TEAM SPORTS**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY**



*James  
Williams*

**Amherst Media®**  
PUBLISHER OF PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS



## **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to my two children, Lisa Marie and James Matthew.  
They would make any parent proud.

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# INTRODUCTION

**P**hotographing organized sports teams can be a lucrative business. Many photographers in large metropolitan areas make a very comfortable living photographing nothing but sports leagues. Our studio, on the other hand, is located in Warren, OH, where the population is approximately

50,000 people. Though we come from a small town, we still manage to photograph several thousand players each year. This goes to show that there is money to be made in any market. Photography can be very profitable, but only if you have the passion and desire to do what it takes to become successful.

Like many things in life, photographing sports leagues is not as easy as it may look to the novice. After all, if it were easy, everyone would be doing it.

Because you do not need a studio to win contracts to photograph either school or league athletes and teams, bargain-priced, part-time photographers who are looking for some extra weekend cash will probably be some of your main competition. And, make no mistake, the competition is quite

Kids (and parents) look forward to the team photography every year. To succeed in this competitive business, you have to deliver great images and great customer service.





Team sports are a big part of many kids' lives, and portraits that show them in their uniforms are treasured mementos of these good times.

**I WILL WALK YOU THROUGH WHAT YOU  
NEED TO KNOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT  
PHOTOGRAPHING SPORTS LEAGUES.**

fierce, so you must have superior equipment, top-notch lighting know-how, and excellent organizational skills.

In this book, I will walk you through what you need to know to be successful at photographing organized sports leagues. If you are living in a small community, chances are you will need to do other types of photography to make a living. If you just want to supplement your day-job income, this may be the way to do it. Sports photography may even be a good way to see if you are cut out to operate a full-time photography business.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Williams has been involved with photography for more than twenty years. He photographed his first wedding in 1984. The following year he photographed approximately ten high-school seniors in the basement of his home. In 1986, he photographed almost one hundred seniors, again in the basement, while still continuing to photograph weddings. In 1987, the decision was made to build a studio addition onto his home. Today James and his wife Cathy operate a high-end wedding, family, and high-school senior business, along with taking on sports-league and high-school-senior contracts.

James is certified through the Professional Photographers of America (PPA) as well as the Professional Photographers of Ohio. In 2001, he was inducted into the prestigious Society of Professional Photographers of Ohio. Membership is by invitation only. In 2002, he was elected president of the Society of Northern Ohio Professional Photographers. Based out of Cleveland, this organization has a membership of over seventy-five members. In February of 2004, James earned the Accolade of Photographic Mastery from Wedding and Portrait Photographers International (WPPI). He is one of only eight photographers to hold this degree from his home state of Ohio. In 2005, James completed the requirements for his Craftsman degree from PPA and also completed the requirements for the Accolade of Outstanding Photographic Achievement from WPPI.

Williams lectures several times a year at various photography organizations and presents lighting, posing, and marketing seminars at his studio. He is the author of *How to Create a High Profit Photography Business in Any Market*, also from Amherst Media.



# 1. ESTABLISH YOUR BUSINESS

**A**s I mentioned in the introduction, there *is* money to be made in photography. Still, I think it's fair to say that the photography business is not an *easy* way to make a living. For that reason, it only makes sense to be smart about your business, implementing policies and strategies designed to give you an edge on the competition. These basic techniques apply not just to team and sports photography, but to the operation of all types of studios. Additional techniques will be covered in chapter 9.

## SET SHORT AND LONG-RANGE GOALS

Before you start your journey into sports photography, or any other ambition for that matter, stop and think about where you want to be with your new endeavor several years from now. Without a plan or “road map,” your chances of reaching your goal are slim. Starting with the end in mind is one of many concepts I learned in 1997 at a Stephen R. Covey seminar. For those of you who have never heard of him, Mr. Covey is an extremely successful lecturer and writer. His concepts and ideas are used throughout corporate America. Whether you are running General Motors or a small photography business, certain business principles apply. I highly suggest you read Covey's book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People* (Free Press, 2004).

Talk to any business owner and they will tell you how important short- and long-range goals are for the success of your business. Short-range goals will be your daily or weekly goals. Your long-range goals establish where you want to be in one to five years—or even farther down the line. It's best to have these goals written down. Be sure that they are difficult but attainable.

When I stumbled into the photography business over two decades ago, I decided that I wanted to do everything first class—with both my photography and with my clients. As a result, we have always been completely honest with our clients over the years. This may sound naive . . . but I once assumed that *all* businesses were honest with *all* their customers *all* of the time. Sad to say, but that is not always the case. A couple of years ago we hired a

**STOP AND THINK ABOUT**

**WHERE YOU WANT TO BE**

**WITH YOUR NEW ENDEAVOR**

**SEVERAL YEARS FROM NOW.**

**FACING PAGE**—As in sports, success in business requires setting goals and working hard to achieve them.

