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Throughout this year, I have learned to recognize the importance of individuality not only in my own work but also in the stories I aim to tell. Each person I photograph has a unique story, a distinct identity that deserves to be celebrated. I strive to capture the essence of individuals, highlighting their passions and vulnerabilities, showing the world who they really are.

As a high school photographer with a passion for sports, I have discovered a compelling aspect of photography. Sports photography is a genre that combines my love for both photography and athletics, allowing me to capture the energy, passion, and raw emotions that unfold on the playing field. Sports photography holds a special place in my heart because it enables me to freeze those split-second moments of triumph, determination, and teamwork that define an individual or team. Whether it's the victorious celebration of a winning goal, or the fierce determination etched on an athlete's face, these are moments that deserve to be immortalized.

As primarily a sports photographer, I have learned the importance of anticipation and quick reflexes. In fast-paced sporting events, every second counts, and being able to anticipate and capture those pivotal moments requires precision, agility, and thought. It has taught me the importance of being in the right place at the right time, ready to seize the moment and tell the story through my images. This same idea applies to other areas of photography as well, not only athletics, as you never know when something extraordinary may happen.

Photography has taught me that sometimes the best picture is not always of the biggest thing happening, or the whole team. To fully encapsulate a year it is undeniably necessary to include the "big picture" moments like team pictures or group hugs. However, in my opinion, it is in the people that something truly amazing may be found. In any group setting members tend to be categorized as one, such as a team or a club, and sometimes the individual person is overlooked. Photography enables me to emphasize these people and create a new importance to what may have been missed. Unique talents should be honored, dedication should be praised, and emotion should be highlighted from all aspects of life. I strive to capture these glimpses of authenticity and effort, freezing them in time for all to see.

Photography has become an inseparable part of my life and has instilled in me a deep appreciation for the intersection of art and storytelling. Through my lens, I aim to celebrate the human spirit, to inspire others, and to capture the beauty and power that a moment can possess. I am excited to continue my journey in photography by exploring new techniques, expanding my portfolio, and freezing moments in time for people to forever enjoy.

Reflection:

Volleyball has always been so enjoyable for me to shoot because of all of the action packed into such a small space. To get this shot, I positioned myself a few seats up on the bleachers so I could be at eye level with the players instead of a typical volleyball photo from the ground. I think the net creates a fun obstacle to try to capture the game through, and the clarity through the netting is what made this shot so special to me.



Caption:

Power Play. During a Friday night “quad” tournament, starting middle hitter Kaitlyn Debs ’23 spikes through the hands of her opponents. “It was so nice to see our hard work paying off and I think this game really highlighted that,” Debs said.

Reflection:

Basketball is such a unique sport to take photos of as the vertical aspect of it is different than any typical field sport. It really gives you new opportunities when it comes to angles and shots which I tried to showcase with this photo. From this angle, laying under the basket among the cheerleaders, I was able to not only get the dunk, but also his teammate's and defender's reactions. When an amazing moment like this happens all eyes turn to the one dunking, but I think that the pure emotion reaction of a supportive teammate is what makes this moment so incredible.

**Caption:**

Slam Dunk. During Lyons Township's Mental Health Awareness Game, Graham Smith '23 dunks over the head of enthusiastic teammate Carter Reid '23. This pivotal moment led to a scoring streak, and a win for the Lions against the Bulldogs. "This was a really fun game for us. I loved the energy from the crowd and team, making for a great fundraiser," Smith said.

Reflection:

I love that in this photo you can see Patrick's amazed face, the reactions of his teammates, and excitement of the crowd, showing the bigger picture of this moment. I like the clarity of his shocked face through his helmet, and how the continuity of colors between the jerseys, turf, and even trees creates an eye catching scene that highlights the moment perfectly.

**Caption:**

Special Delivery. The special teams score a rare touchdown when Patrick Cramer '23 blocks a punt and runs it into the end zone. "It was an insane moment that I will never forget, and one my favorite games of the season," Cramer said.

Reflection:

When Jake suddenly dumped the gallon of milk on his head I quickly focused in on his expression. The clarity of his smile through the flowing milk is my favorite part of this shot, and the motion blur of the milk splattering all around him adds a unique sense of movement and life to the photo.

**Caption:**

Lactose Tolerant. In the annual “Mr. LT” fundraiser and talent show competition, Jake Gripp ’23 was in the middle of playing the electric guitar and chugging milk when he abruptly gave up and decided to dump the rest of the gallon on his head. While this change in act was not appreciated by the janitors, it induced a burst of laughter from the crowd and was the most memorable part of the contest. “I quickly realized that I wasn’t going to be able to finish all of the milk during the song so I just dumped it on my head to make the crowd laugh,” Gripp said.

Reflection:

When taking photos of dance, or in this case Poms, I look for moments of expression and emotion, not only movement. So much of what makes a dance memorable is the emotion that comes with it, and this photo captures the feeling that this dance conveyed. I sat on the floor near center stage to try to catch the perfect moment of the solo, and I love how the depth of field highlights Maddie but there is still enough clarity to see the emotion of the girls behind her.

**Caption:**

All Out. During the Lyons Township boys basketball “blackout” game, the Poms team took the stage to perform their dance called Change is Everything. Maddie Shorrock ’23 performed a solo in front of her teammates near the end of the performance. “This dance was so important for me because as a senior it would be the last time I was dancing with some of my best friends,” Shorrock said.