

Why It's Time to Get Started in **Volume Sports Photography**

10 Questions Answered by UK Photographer Tony Blood





Volume sports photography consists of individual and team athlete portraits, rather than action-based shots.

Tony Blood and his colleague Luke Furgeson from PicDay in Peterborough have conquered this area of photography that is rarely seen in the UK market.

The two have been actively offering sports photography for the past two years now, “and the market is growing rapidly all the time”. Learn about this new area of volume photography and why now is the time to break into this promising market.

Key Takeaways

£25 to £30
average order value

60%
package buy rate

Notable Quotes

Easy Expansion

“I would say if you’ve already got photography skills and experience photographing nurseries, then sports is the next obvious place to go.”

GotPhoto in Sports Photography

“When we first started, we didn’t know about GotPhoto, so we built our own website and tried to do it all manually. It took us absolutely forever! Then we discovered GotPhoto and it saved us an incredible amount of time. I’m not being paid to say that either; it’s absolutely, honestly brilliant. Really, really good. For us it works perfectly.”

A Packed Calendar

“We focused on sports and that’s opening doors to other areas as well. Also, sports photography is mostly happening on evenings and weekends. So doing things, like nurseries, and schools, gives us something to do during the day as well.”

The Perks of Composites

“A lot of photographers still do that all-in-one group image at schools with the big setup and everything. We don’t need any of that and it cuts down the cost for us and for the customer and we get arguably better results, too, in my opinion.”

Interview with Tony

1 What types of volume photography do you do?

We started out sports-focused, but from that, we've got more and more nurseries. We're finding that the nursery community talks to each other and that benefits us. So, we're finding that through sports jobs. And obviously the kids go to schools and other things, which gives us other opportunities, as well. We are happy to do other things, but we focused on sports and that's opening doors to other areas as well. Also, sports photography is mostly happening on evenings and weekends. So doing things, like nurseries, and schools, gives us something to do during the day as well, when we're not editing the sports pitches that we may have taken of an evening.

2 What are the busy months in your sports calendar?

That'd be September, October, November. So at the start of the season, people have got new kits, new players, new sponsors. They want to show all of that off. And then towards the end of the season as we get close to presentation evenings, people want photographs to remember the season for gifts, for sponsors, or whatever it may be. So we found the very busy periods are the beginning and the end of a football season. But then you've got sports, like cricket, hockey that are summer sports, and that's sort of filling potential gaps as well.

3 What are the sports that you have focused on so far?

Both myself and my business partner Luke come from a footballing background. We both coached for a number of years, so we had lots of contacts in the local area. That was an obvious place to start with football, and that's probably the main sport that we do. But more and more sports are now starting to get involved. We've photographed rugby, cricket, hockey, martial arts, basketball so far. We got a cheerleading group booked in as well. So basically wherever there's a team sport going on, that's where we're trying to be.

4 And just to be clear, we're always talking about individual sports photos here, right?

Yeah, that's right. So we use the green screen. The kids will stand in front of us, one at a time. They'll do a number of poses. And then from those poses, we'll create individual pictures but also team and entire club pictures. So, one club we worked with, got over 500 players and we created a whole club panoramic photo of every single player, coach and committee member in a single picture. All looking the right way, all looking smart. We captured those people individually over two or three weekends. I guess that's one of those key benefits of doing virtual groups in general. You've got many pictures of every individual anyways, done on multiple days, so you can just pin it all together at the end and make it in your own time, rather than trying to get that one good shot. So, that works perfectly. And a lot of photographers still do that all-in-one group image at schools with the bleachers and the big setup and everything. We don't need any of that and it cuts down the cost for us and for the customer and we get arguably better results, too, in my opinion.

5 So in every job, you're doing an individual and a team option that they can buy in the shop then, right?

Each parent has the option to buy individual pictures of their child, with different backgrounds, and that child will also appear in a team panoramic picture. So a nice club picture, hands behind the back, showing off the sponsor, looking smart, and then one that's more of a memory mate*, where we give them the option to do whatever pose they want to do. It gives them a chance to show off their personality. They might do their favourite football player's pose, goal celebration or whatever it may be, and then we build a team picture of all of those individual ones. So it's a bit more of a fun picture. They really like that one.

6 Do you have a good way to acquire sports jobs? Probably most clubs in Britain don't have this sort of professional photography right now. So is it something they are hesitant about? Do you have any tips that you could pass on to others?

It can be challenging to get into clubs initially, if they're not aware of what it is that you do. So, it's completely free. That's how we sell it to the clubs. It's a completely free photoshoot for them and it's also a brilliant fundraiser, because from all the sales of the photo packages we give 10% back to the club. The parents get nice pictures of their kids, the club gets nice pictures for social media to raise the club's profile.

So, once you get that message over to them, it's a little bit of a no-brainer. Why wouldn't a club do this? All clubs need money to continue providing their services, buying new kit equipment, and so on. So there are some easy quick wins to get into a club, and then once they see the pictures, they understand that they sell themselves really. And then all the other clubs will see what they have done and it becomes a bit of a snowball effect. Once you've gotten through the door of a couple clubs, it's much easier to then use them as reference points for other clubs.

And most people if they haven't got children that play sports, they will have friends or family with children who do. And I'm sure there'll be a club that will say, "Come and try it with us". It's only a benefit for the club. There's no downside to it for them at all. The whole process can be slow at first but once you start moving, it picks up quite quickly.

7 Did you have someone that you were learning from? Or did you come up with everything and train yourself?

It's all self trained and taught, but I got inspiration from Facebook groups. That kind of photography is very big in the US and there are many Facebook groups out there. Lots of people do that, so I got lots of inspiration and tips from them. And now, you know, people approach us for advice!

**Memory Mates are graphically designed templates that have space for both an individual photo and a team photo. You can either build them yourself or outsource their creation – all within GotPhoto's ecosystem.*

8 And you're selling these on GotPhoto, 100% online, right?

Correct, yes. When we first started, we didn't know about GotPhoto, and we built our own website and tried to do it all manually. It took us absolutely forever! Then we discovered GotPhoto and it saved us an incredible amount of time. I'm not being paid to say that either, it's absolutely, honestly brilliant. Really, really good. For us it works perfectly.

9 Did you teach yourself Photoshop, too?

Yeah, so I've always had an interest in art, graphic design, things like that. So I did have some prior knowledge of Photoshop. But you don't need to be an expert in Photoshop for this. It's just the basics, really. It might be adjusting the brightness, the lights, and so on. We're not talking too technical or too extreme. So people without any Photoshop experience should be able to pick up what's required very quickly.**

10 GotPhoto's customers base is mostly school and nursery photographers at the moment, but of course, there's more and more sports photographers joining. Is there anything you'd like to say to photographers that currently focus on nurseries and schools? Any tips you could provide?

I would say if you've already got photography skills and experience photographing nurseries, then sports is the next obvious place to go. And most of the kids you're photographing are probably involved in a sports club as well, and you're going to be dealing with those parents for the sales from the schools and nurseries. It's a huge market.

Tony, thank you very much for sitting down with us and talking about volume sports photography and its potential.

***GotPhoto is offering software solutions to easily create memory mates and team composites seamlessly within minutes. The extraction part can also be outsourced completely. Get in touch to learn more about QMate, Team Photo Composite, and Next Gen!*



Sounds Good? Get in Touch!



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