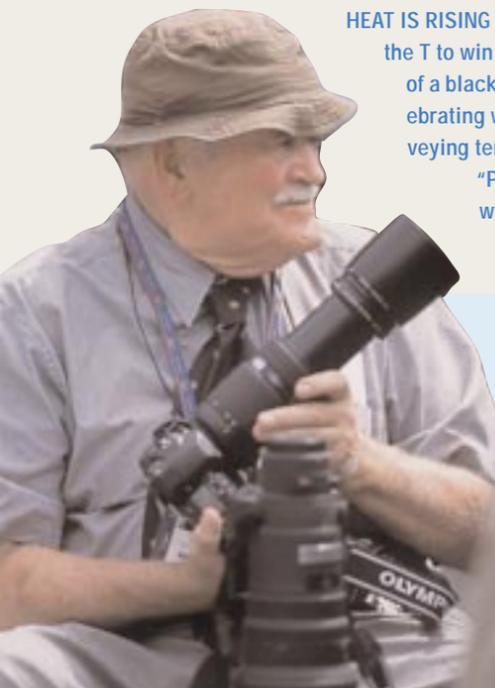


A veteran photographer tells fans how to bring great photos home from a match.

SHOOTING STARS

By Chris Nicholson
Photography by Russ Adams



HEAT IS RISING OFF THE COURT. Andy Roddick pauses, leans back into his service motion, and slams an ace down the T to win a five-set semifinal marathon. In a court-side dugout, a photographer—one eye pressed to the rear of a black, metal camera, one finger gently depressing a shutter-release—captures an image of Roddick celebrating with a yell and a clenched fist. Within minutes, the photograph is posted on www.usopen.org, conveying tennis' flavor to a worldwide, sports-hungry public.

"Photography is critical to tennis," says Mark Huggins, director of brand marketing for Olympus, which is the official camera of the US Open and US Open Series and helps supply the [usopen.org](http://www.usopen.org) images. "A zoom lens gets that expression on a player's face, sweat dripping down, and you can just study that and get so much out of that moment in time. That's the power of photography."

Of course, it's not just pro photographers who aim lenses at tennis players. Photo-buff fans can be seen at any tennis event. Whether you're shooting the pros or carrying your camera to the local courts, veteran tennis photographer Russ Adams (left), who has shot the pros for 53 years, offers tips on how to take great tennis photos.

Gearing Up

One of the most important gear issues is lens choice. "On the side courts, you can use a 100mm or 200mm lens and get fairly good shots," Adams says. "If you're limited to the stands in a stadium, get up high enough so that you're shooting over anybody in front of you, and use a 200mm lens."

For his photography, Adams uses the Olympus E1 digital camera with a 50-200mm zoom lens and a 300mm telephoto lens.

If you're shooting with a film camera, Adams advises using 200-speed print film for day matches, and 800-speed at night. And, whether using film or digital gear, try to use a shutter speed of at least 1/500 to freeze the action.



Player Proximity

If you want to get your camera close to the action, says Adams, you don't have to buy front-row seats. The best place for a fan to photograph a match may be at the side courts or in the secondary stadiums, where—with patience and planning—you can often sit court-side and capture scenes such as Andre Agassi (above) stretched out for a shot. Getting that close to the action will allow you either to sit near the net and shoot back toward the baseline, or to sit near the baseline and shoot across the net into the opposite court. Both angles will help keep the crowd out of the background, making for a cleaner-looking photograph.



Creative Camerawork

Toward the end of the afternoon, the changing light will bring creative opportunities. "You can backlight or side-light a player," Adams says. "Or get up higher in the stands and shoot down, and you can get a player's shadow on the court, giving you an artistic type of photo." Adams also makes creative use of the net and netcord, as in this photo of Maria Sharapova (left) taken from below the level of the netcord.

Timing Challenge

When shooting any sport, a common mistake is not to press the shutter-release until you see the ball in the viewfinder. "If you see the ball in the camera, you've missed the shot," Adams says. "By the time your brain tells you to press your finger to get the camera working, the ball will be gone." Adams' advice is to anticipate when the player will hit the ball, then time your shot accordingly, as he did in capturing Roger Federer (below).



Stay Focused

Adams says the biggest challenge to a tennis photographer is concentration. Putting your camera down so you can rest might mean missing a great photographic opportunity, such as this classic Jimmy Connors shot (left) from 1991. "Keep on your toes," Adams says, "because things happen fast."



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