



**COMPOSITION FOR
SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY**

Composition refers to the placement of elements in a photograph (artwork).

Good composition is one where the elements in the picture provide unity - a sense of belonging and each element supports the main subject.

Try to organize the elements of a pictures so the picture is seen as a whole.

Should you Shoot Vertical or Horizontal?



Try to do include photos in both formats

Aspect Ratios for Framing



4:3 Digital

A black rectangular frame representing a 4:3 aspect ratio.

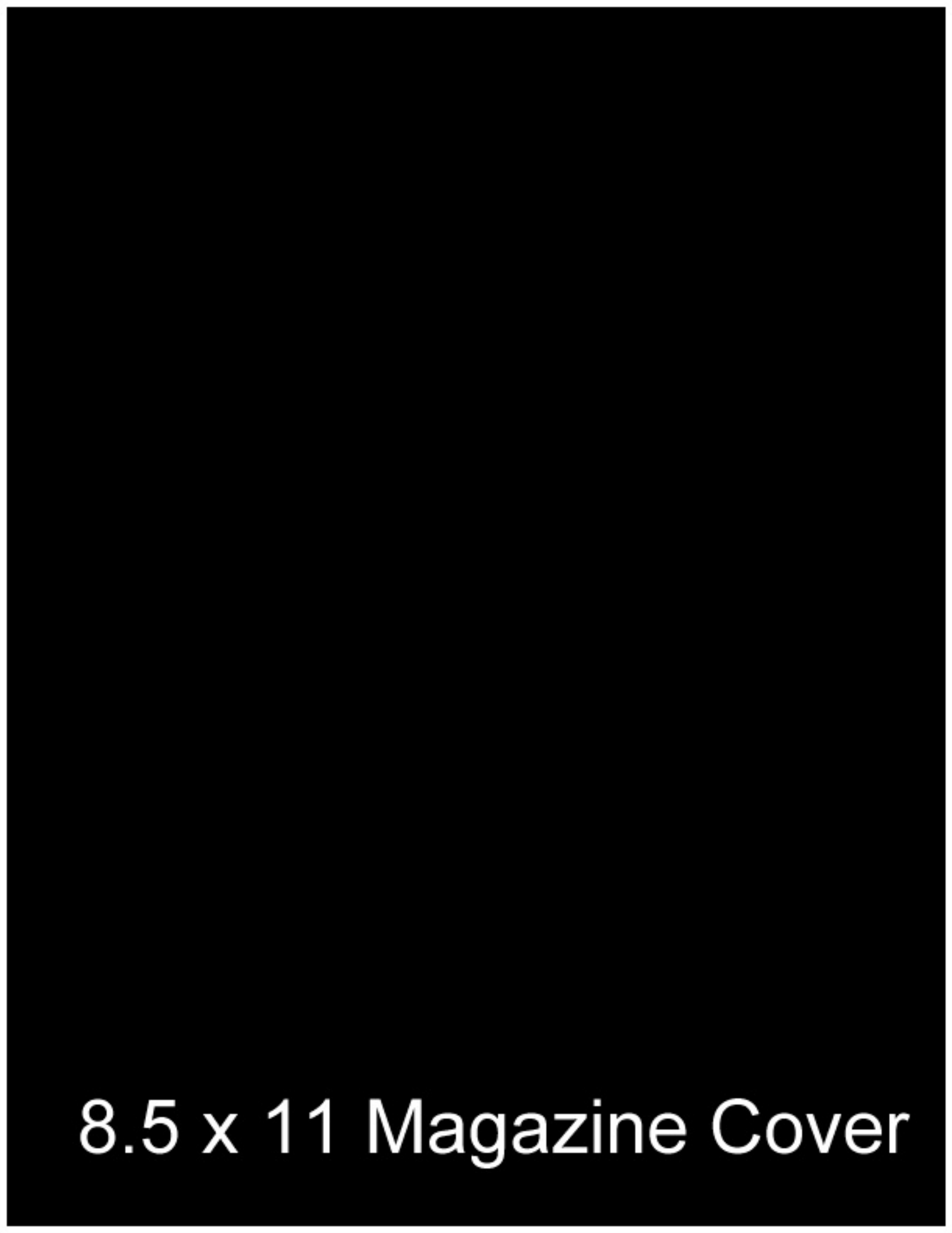
16:9 HD Video

A black rectangular frame representing a 16:9 aspect ratio.

1:1 Hasselblad

A black square frame representing a 1:1 aspect ratio.

3:2 Slide Film - Digital

A black rectangular frame representing a 3:2 aspect ratio.

8.5 x 11 Magazine Cover

A black rectangular frame representing an 8.5 x 11 aspect ratio.

Aspect Ratios for Framing Pictures



If you want to shoot for magazines remember to shoot some vertical shots - though horizontal images can be cropped.

How to achieve Unity or a Sense of Belonging?

1. Through dominance and subordination - ask yourself what do you want the viewer to see first in the picture and how do the other elements support the main subject?
2. Subject dominance can be achieved by differences in size, colour, location, focal point, convergence and the use of light and dark.
3. Dominance refers to how a photographer can control the amount of attention the main subject receives and the sequence in which the elements in a picture are observed. Great pictures also tell a story and evoke strong emotions.



Dominance through color & position

Dominance through color & light
Repetition





Example of Rythm - repeated elements



Convergence



Note how the light draws attention to the rider

Visual Guidelines for Effective Photos

1. Rule of thirds
2. Golden Mean
3. Positive\Negative Space
4. Line, Shape, Form, Colour, Rhythm

		Rule of Thirds

Position elements of interest near the vertices and the horizon near one of the horizontal lines. The objective is to provide some asymmetry in your composition.



Rule of thirds





Distractions

make believe

3D



Player is in the middle of the Frame

make believe





Some Times The Center is the Best Place



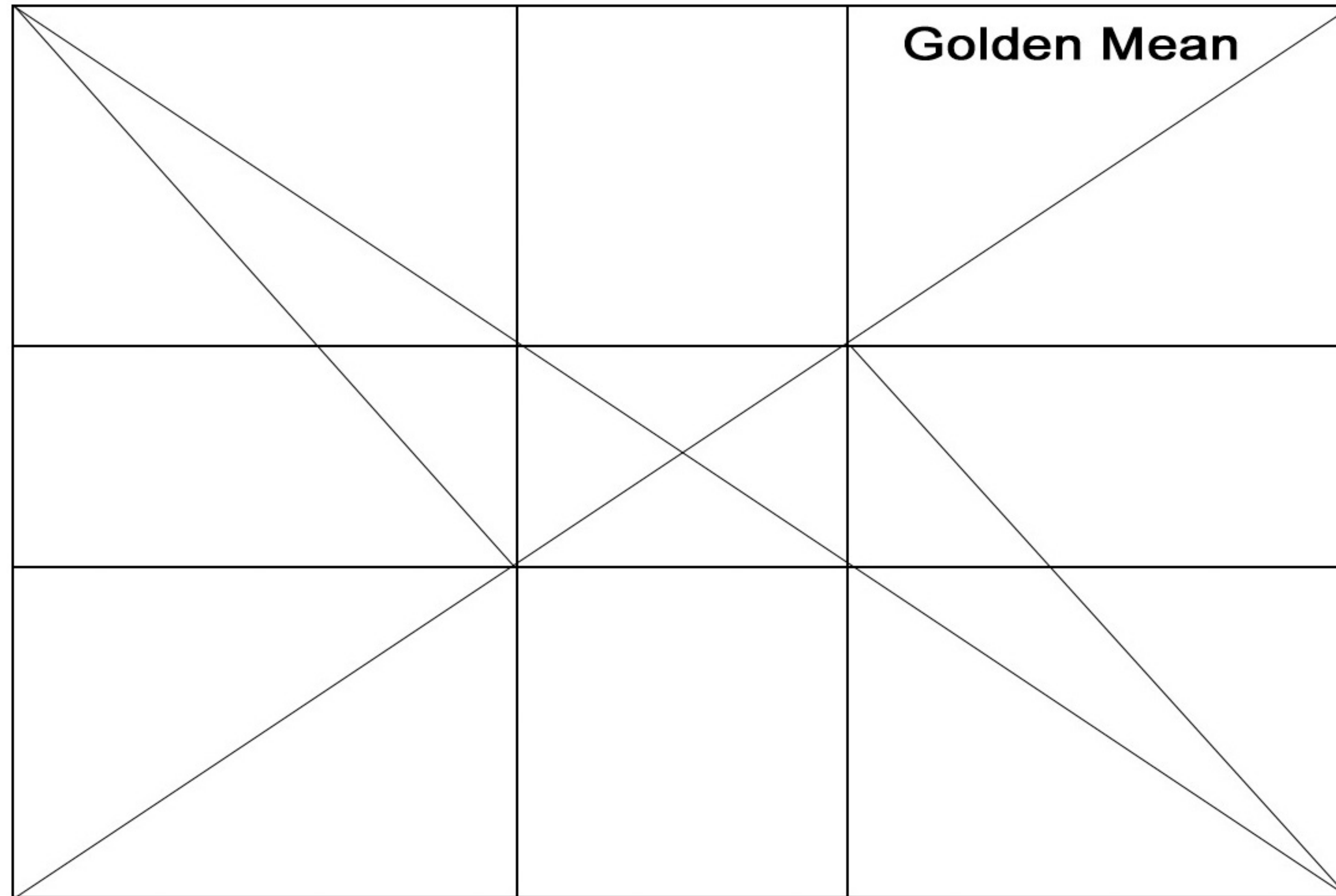
Follow the Action



An alternative compositional guideline to the rule of thirds is to simply keep your main subject an unequal distance from the frame border. Also leave space in front of the action.

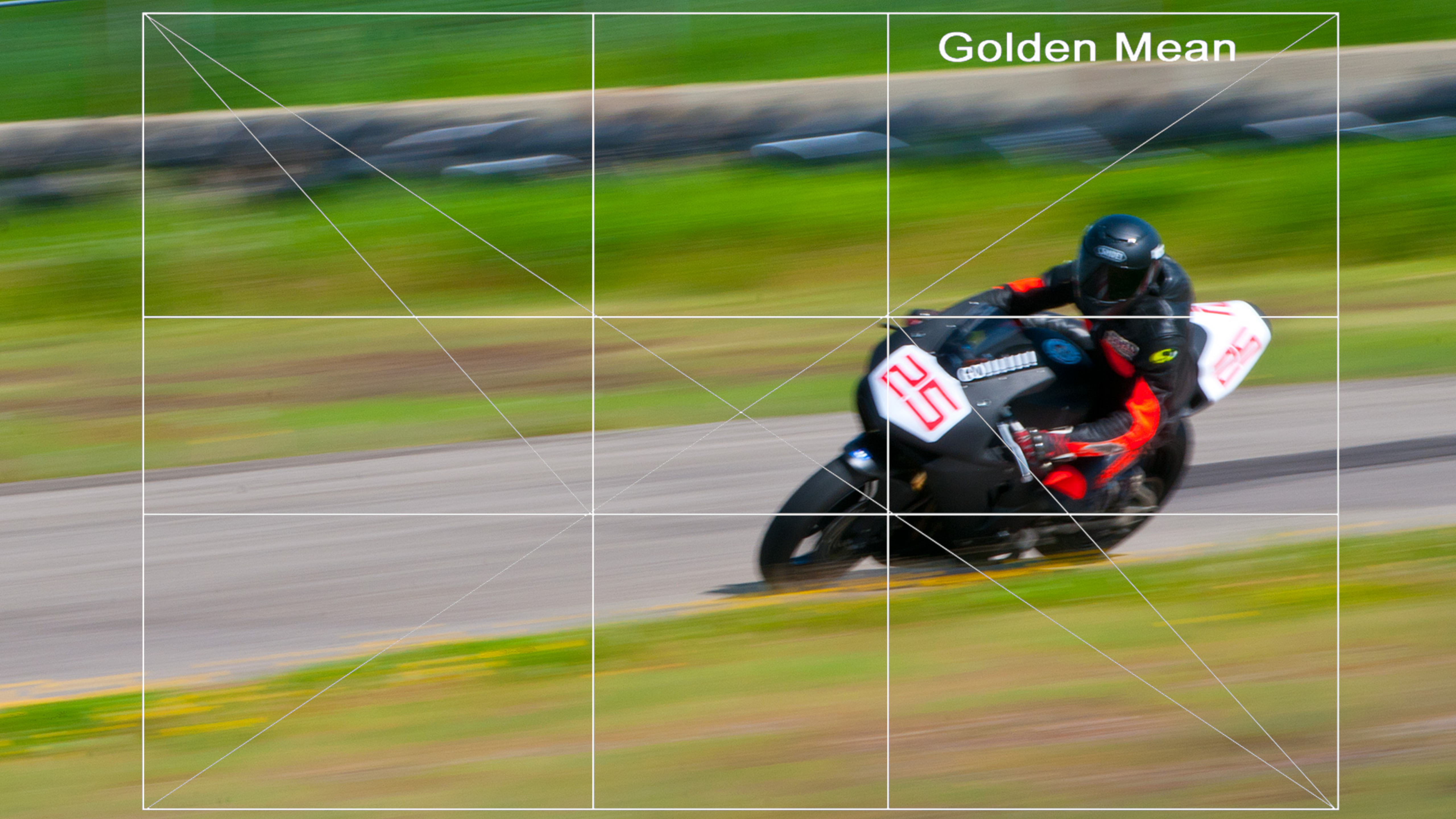


What Would Make this a Better Photo?



Golden mean is derived from the number series: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34 i.e. the sum of the two preceeding numbers. The ratio formed is 1:1.618. This number forms a proportion which some people respond to. It is also commonly found in biology and has been used by some painters. Like the rule of thirds you position elements of interest at the vertices or along horizontal and vertical lines.

Golden Mean



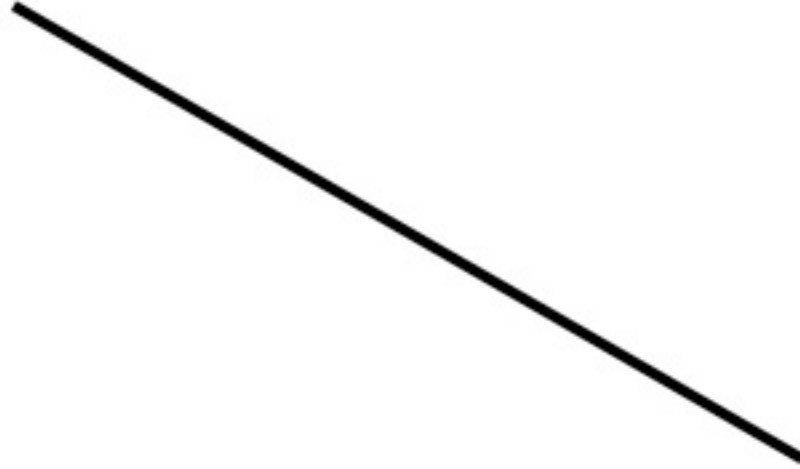
Lines



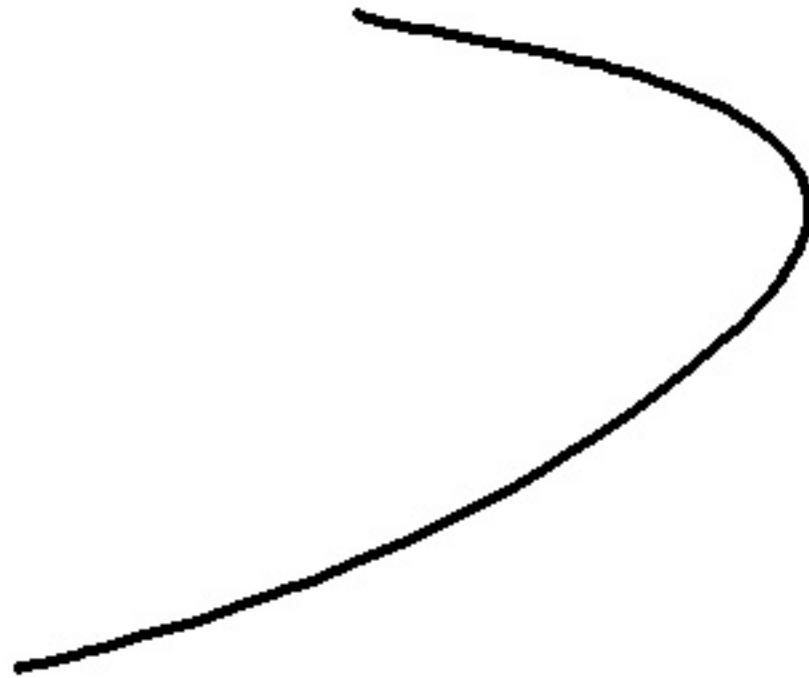
Horizontal line: implies at rest, peaceful, tranquility



Vertical line: implies strength, power, support



Angled line: implies movement, transition, instability



Curved line: quite, calm, sensuous

Look for lines when you compose your pictures and think about what type of feeling you want to convey in your pictures.

Backlighting





All Ontario High School Pole Vault Championships 1972 - Note use of vertical and curved lines



Curving line and angled lines mixed with repetition



Curving Lines can suggest sensuality



Angle implies movement and speed - space in front shows where the bike is headed



Negative Space



Positive Space

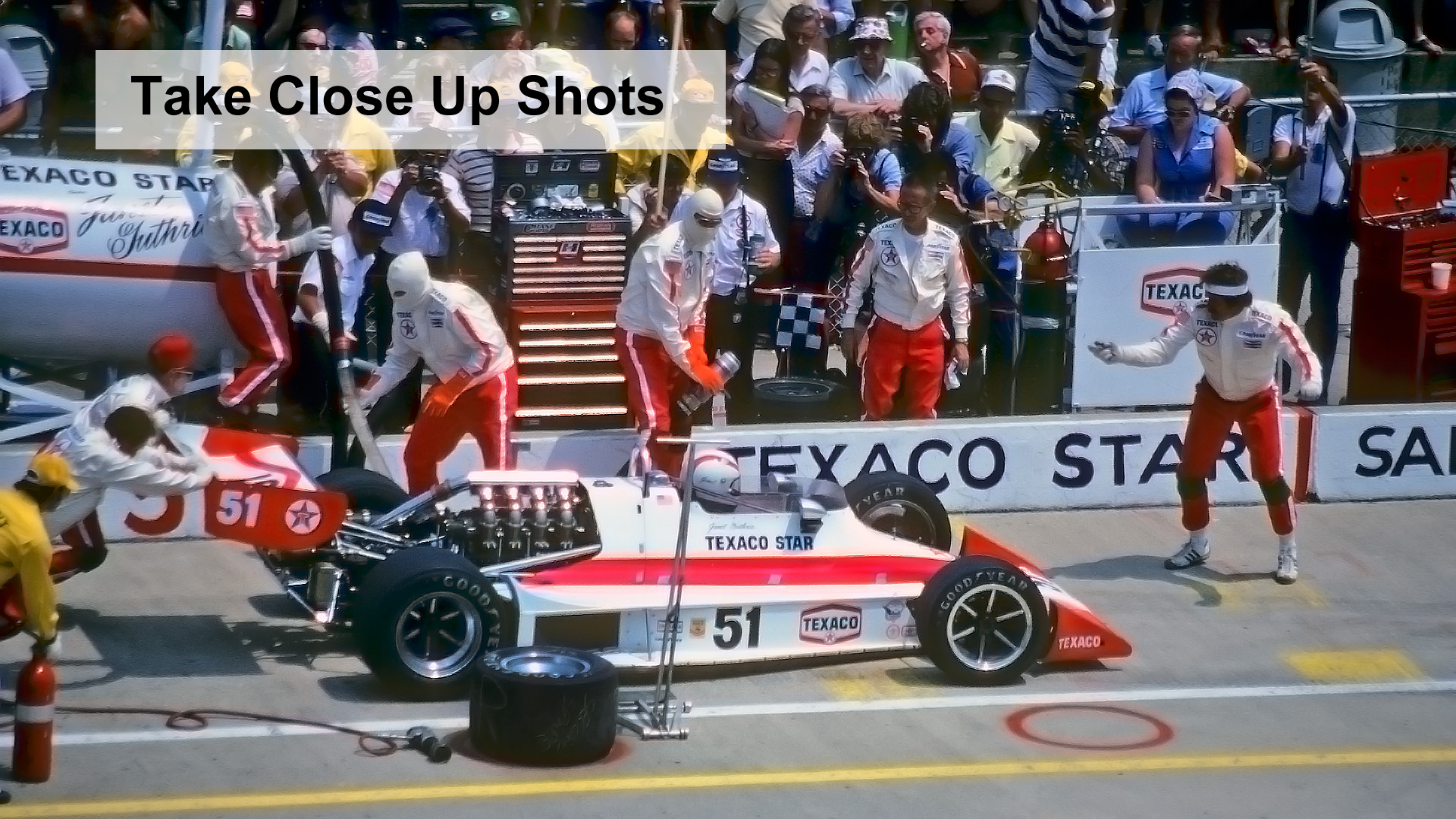
A balance between the amount of positive space (subject) and negative space (background) depends the size, colour and shape of the main subject.

Establishing shot shows the venue and size of the crowd



INDY 500

Take Close Up Shots



Take Close Ups





Get a Face Shot

TEXAS OPEN WORLD SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mario Sanchez

Ned Edwards

Mark Talbot

Get a Group or Team Photo

Sharif Khan

Jahangir Khan

Hussein Meguid

Geoff Hunt

Calgary Flames Stanley Cup Finals



Get a shot of the Crowd



Power of the Background

Robert Berdan ©



Use Selective Focus to Isolate the Subject





Example of Selective Focus only rider 99 is in focus



Capture the Action

Include the Background



Experiment with long exposures and pan for more expressive photos



In Summary

Things to think about before you take a picture

1. Consider whether to shoot vertically or horizontally.
2. Identify the main element in your shot and where you will place it - the main element should be an unequal distance from each side of the frame.
3. Identify lines in your picture and determine if you can use them to direct the viewer's attention. Follow the action.
4. Capture the action "decisive moment" try to include a face to identify the athlete.
5. Beware of the background, include establishing shots of the venue and include shots of the crowd.