

HeavyMetalConcepts Filming Refresher

Filming methodology

Always be on the move. If you are filming from one location (for example, a jump) get one shot at one angle, another shot at another, the next at another, so on and so forth. Don't change angles just for the sake of changing them however. Utilize the best angle/lighting for the shot. In the end we don't want 15 shots of the same thing happening with 15 different rigs from the same angle. An exception to this is if one angle is so far and wide better than the others due to lighting/view/perspective/whatever else, use it the best you can.

Lengthen your shot duration. If possible, provide a lead-up to the shot, and a lead out. What this means is..if you are filming a race car coming, start recording a few seconds before they come into view, and record for a few seconds after they leave view. This allows for time for a transition in the editing program when putting it all together if deemed necessary. This applies to most things, not just race scenarios.

B-roll, record it. B-roll is supplemental or alternate footage intercut with the main shot in a documentary. For example, shots of people walking around/interacting, cars being prepped, natural surroundings like wild animals, tall grass in the wind, scenic overlooks, sunsets/rises, basically anything that isn't necessarily the main focus of what is being filmed, but can be supplemental to the production in the end.

Steady, committed shot. One of the major differences between an amateur production and a professional one is camera moves. An example of this is, if a race car is passing another car and you aren't in the perfect spot for it, do not run or move mid shot unless you are 100% positive you can lock a steady shot on the action before it happens. A shot is essentially ruined, or at least deemed useless if, like in the example, the shot of the car passing the other is lost in a running camera shake. *A steady hand and good judgment about how much you can move while keeping a shot still useful is a big step in the battle for good video.* There are exceptions to some of this, but that is mostly up to judgment. If you are totally out of sight of what is going on, do what you can to get what you can on film. If you are going to really have to move or run, commit to it and steady up when you are in position. It cannot be stressed enough that a steady focused shot is important.

Interviewing. Don't be afraid to hold an on the spot interview with a competitor right after the end of some action if you have the opportunity. Some of the best reactions/quotes come right at the end of an adrenaline rush. Talking points from people in general is a good thing. They flesh out a production nicely.

Be aware of your surroundings. Stay out of the way of competitors at all costs. Know where your pan shot will end up before you do it (panning across people's heads, panning to where you can't see anything). Something easily forgotten is your stance, be aware of how your body will have to move to complete a pan shot or similar, you will pan and move much smoother with this in mind and planned out, instead of just having to adjust mid camera move.

Audio audio audio. What's happening in front of you is exciting, after all you have one of the best seats in the house and have essentially full access to a course normally closed to spectators, but keep your voice quiet until you stop recording. You may want to yell to someone something about what is going on in front of you, however that is picked up by the camera and probably needs to be edited out or edited around in final production stages.

Don't be afraid to use the zoom. Part of event production is giving people a view into what you don't normally see sitting around at the pits, or on 1 spot of the course. That can mean getting a nice steady zoomed shot of a rig flying towards you where you can see the suspension moving and the drivers in the seats. Having a slew of shots completely unzoomed of rigs going by or doing whatever isn't very awe inspiring and tends to become tedious/generic in feel. You must find a balance, as you can't have every shot zoomed to the end of the lens, and every other shot with no zoom whatsoever.

Angles. Another part of videography and photography is perspective. You want to capture a perspective/view that isn't always eye/head level of the average person just standing there. Up on a hill from afar, down on the ground (literally groundlevel) up close or at medium distance, in a tree, on a rock, framed between two objects, anything. An out of the norm view can lend a lot of interest to an otherwise average shot.

Be aware of conditions. Dust likes to ruin things quickly. While it can make for a great shot, be aware of dust on/around the camera. It makes tape heads dirty (ruining the shot on the tape), gets on lenses and makes them dirty/marked up, and generally gets inside the electronics and creates havoc. If needed, shield the camera from a dust cloud. Above all, just be aware where dust will go as a car passes, and position yourself accordingly. Water also is not good, but that about goes without saying.