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You shall not pass!

I'm sure a good portion of the world watched the Women's World Cup this year. It was a great game. My son loves soccer. He's been playing it since he was 4. It was funny to watch kids that age trying to play soccer. There were no real positions, and for the 4-5 year old groups, no goalies either. All the kids would chase after the ball like a swarm of bees.

When they hit 6-8, the changes are big. The field they play on is half the size of a full-size field, and there are now goalies. my son always wanted to try the goalie position, but the coaches always wanted him mid-field. a year and a half ago, he finally got his break. The team's goalie went on vacation with his family, and Liem stepped in to fill the void. Starting the goalie position mid-season wasn't ideal, but he did his best.

This past season, Spring 2019, he really started to shine. his team, the Black Panthers, even won the championship game, and it was a bit of a nail biter.

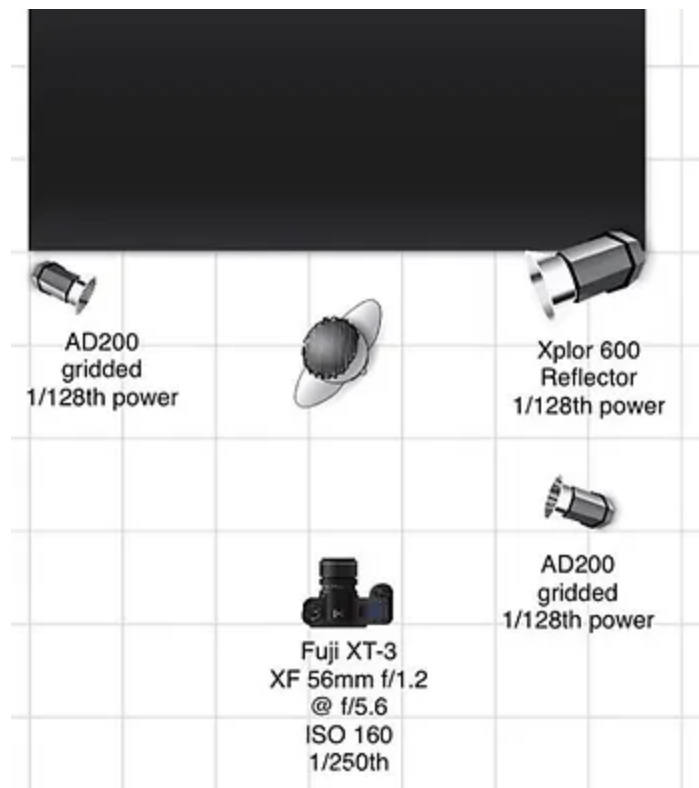
45 minute game, and the teams were tied 2-2. Once the game was over, they had to do 5 minute overtime. The game was still tied 2-2. When that happens, they do penalty kicks... Each team picks 5 players, and they alternate trying to score a goal. No defenders, no distractions. Just the kicker and the goalie.

Well, I am proud to say, not only did his team score 2 more points to win the game, my little goalie blocked every ball. The other team scored no additional points, and his team went on to win 5-2.

So of course I had to do some portraits of my champ.

The first portrait, I wanted a "Fierce, Soccer Warrior" feel. Hard light, deep shadows.

I used a three light setup, all bare flash with the exception of using grids for directional lighting on two of the strobes.





Soccer Warrior

My next portrait, I wanted an action shot. I've gotten action shots each season, but I wanted something solitary, without any other distractions (such as other players, parents in the background, etc.). Off to a soccer field we went.

Now mind you, the soccer goal shown in this photograph is NOT the size he has to protect. Here is an action shot from the championship game to put the size of the goal he protects into perspective...



The soccer goal we shot with was much smaller, but it was probably for the best as I wanted to get the entire goal in the frame. I had him the soccer ball, and then jump towards his left, landing on the bean bag. This took some trial and error, but worked out for the final image.



After that was done (and having probably 2 or 3 dozen mosquito bites), I wanted to do one more photograph.

Everyone remembers the Matrix movies, and Neo's awesome ability to stop bullets?



My son's version. :) Complete with greenish "Matrix" hues.



So, I could have just taken a soccer ball pic, and photoshopped it several times over to get the effect of him stopping multiple balls, but I didn't want them all to look like they were on the same plane. So, I had my darling wife take the soccer ball, and bounce it repeatedly in different spots and varying distances from the soccer goal. I then took those images and photoshopped them into the final image you see here. Some balls are further back and larger, some are closer to the goal and smaller. Some exhibit a bit of motion blur, while some are dead still. I like how the effect turned out.