

Double the photo

A school recently asked me if I had seen any cool new ways to do sports award photos. The school has always just done a quick head-and-shoulders shot of each award-winning athlete. Here's a technique I saw in a very cool new book by Scott Kelby, famed Photoshop guru called *Photoshop CS4 Down and Dirty Tricks*. I highly recommend it. Even though I use it for sports, you could also use it for thespians, actors and speakers.

- First take an candid shot (Figure A) and a portrait shot (Figure B) of the same person you want to feature.
- Open a blank document the size you need for the final picture at 300 ppi. Make the background black (press D to set the default colors to black in foreground and white in background and then click Option/Alt Delete to fill with black).
- Open the candid photo of your athlete and cut him or her out of the background.
- Using the Move tool (topmost pointer in Photoshop toolbar), drag the action shot (without the background) into your new document (the one with the black background). Place the candid shot on the right.
- If the image is larger than the background (and it probably will be), scale the image down by pressing Command/Control T to transform it. Make it smaller by grabbing the lower right corner and dragging it up. Hold down the Shift key to keep the image in proportion as you drag. If you can't see the handles to reduce it, press Command/Control O to fit the entire image on your screen. Then you can reduce the image. Finally click Enter to accept your change.
- Do the same thing to the close-up portrait you took. Drag it to the left side of the new file you created with the black background.
- In the Layers panel, make sure that the portrait is on the topmost layer and that that layer is the active layer (Figure C). Add a layer mask by clicking the layer mask button at the bottom of the Layers panel (Figure D).
- Click on the layer mask (target it) and choose the Gradient tool. If you don't see it, you will find it under the Paint Bucket. You can also select the Gradient tool by typing a G.
- Make sure black is your foreground color, and with the layer mask targeted, click to the right of your candid shot and drag across to about the middle (or just beyond it) of your portrait. When you release the mouse, your portrait should blend into the candid shot like it does in Figure E. If it doesn't blend too much or it blends too little, type Command/Control Z to undo and do it again. This time, drag more or less depending on how you liked the first gradient.
- Once you have the blend the way you want it, you may want to bring back some other parts of the portrait as the gradient may have made the face too dark. If that is the case, choose the brush tool with a large, soft-edged brush and white as your foreground color, and then paint in the face. Since you are using white, it will erase the parts of the mask that are covering the face, giving it back to you completely (Figure F). ○

