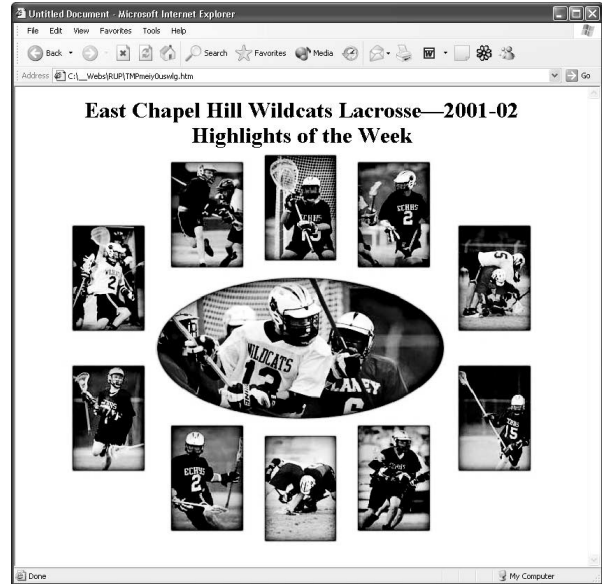


USING A MASK TO CREATE A COLLAGE



29.1

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29.2

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ABOUT THE IMAGE

Lacrosse Action Photos of the Week Canon EOS 1D digital camera, 300mm f/2.8 IS with 1.4x tele-extender, ISO 200 to 1,600, Fine image quality setting, images have been edited and cropped to be 125 x 187 pixel .jpg images

Many art stores, frame shops, and photo stores offer pre-cut collage matte boards, which make it easy to display multiple photos on a single matte board. This technique shows you how to create a digital collage that allows you to easily slip digital images behind a collage mask so that it looks just like the pre-cut matte boards. The benefit of this approach is that you can create a collage mask once, and then use it each time you need to display new photos.

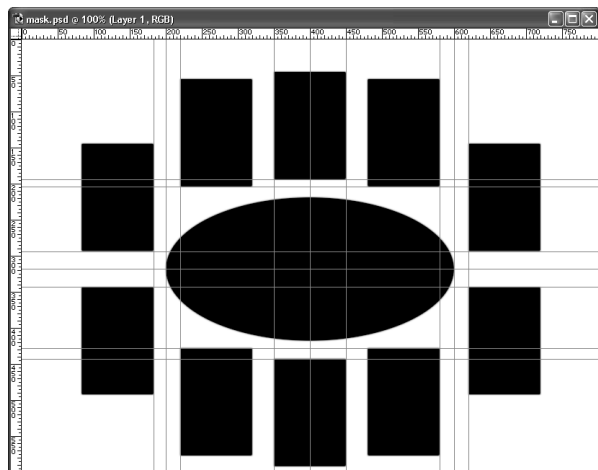
Figure 29.2 shows how a collage mask is used to display eleven lacrosse action photos of the week on a Web page. This pre-defined collage mask may be found on the Companion CD-ROM. If you want to create a collage to print (you need more resolution), or if you want to design your own, follow the instructions in Step 1. Otherwise, skip to Step 2 and use the pre-defined mask.

STEP 1: CREATE COLLAGE MASK

Figure 29.3 shows the layout of the collage you can find on the Companion CD-ROM. It was easily created in just minutes by using the Photoshop 7 rulers and guidelines. Technique 1, Step 1 shows how to set up the rulers and how to use guidelines to create layouts such as this one.

The steps for creating the collage mask are as follows:

1. Create a new image. As this particular collage mask was created for a Web page, it was sized at 800 x 600 pixels.
2. Duplicate the **Background** so that digital photos can slide beneath the collage mask layer (top layer) and above the **Background**.
3. Set rulers to pixels by using **Edit > Preferences > Units & Rulers** as discussed in Technique 1.
4. Drag guidelines from the rulers and drop them where guidelines are needed for locating the masks. To learn more about using guidelines, see Technique 1.



29.3

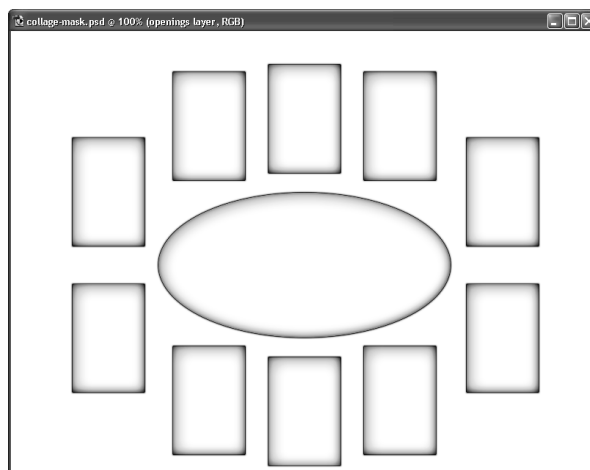
5. Using the **Rectangular Marquee** and **Elliptical Marquee** tools, select each area to be masked (on the top layer) and fill them with black by using **Edit > Fill**.

6. After all the *openings* have been filled with black, select them all with **Select > Color Range** or with the **Magic Wand** tool. To *cut* them out, load the **Frames.atn** actions into the **Actions** palette and then run the **Cutout (selection)** action. To learn how to use actions, see Technique 3.

That's it — your collage mask is now ready for photos to be placed beneath each opening.

STEP 2: INSERT DIGITAL PHOTOS

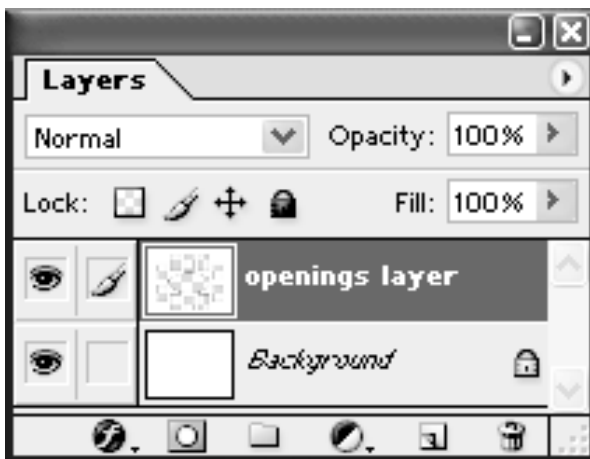
- If you did not create your own collage mask in Step 1, choose **File > Open (Ctrl+O)** to display the **Open** dialog box. Double-click the \29 folder to open it and then click the **collage-mask.psd** file to select it. Click **Open** to open the file. You should now have an image that looks like the one shown in **Figure 29.4** and the **Layers** palette should look like the one shown in **Figure 29.5**.



29.4

Eleven lacrosse images can be found in the \29 folder. The original full-size digital action photos were cropped, edited, resized, and then sharpened so that they would fit inside the masked openings. They were then saved as .jpg files by using the Photoshop 7 Save for Web feature.

- To open all 11 images at once, choose **File > Open (Ctrl+O)** to display the **Open** dialog box. Double-click the /29 folder to open it. Press and hold **Ctrl**; then click each file named **image1.jpg** through **image11.jpg** to select them all. Click **Open** to open all the files into the Photoshop 7 workspace.
- Click **Background** layer in the **Layers** palette to make it the active layer.
- Click the **Move** tool (V) in the **Tools** palette.
- To insert the first photo, click **image1.jpg** to make it the active image and drag it onto the **collage-mask.psd** image. Using the **Move** tool, click and drag the image so that it shows through the center elliptical opening.
- Using the **Move** tool, continue clicking each image and dragging it onto the **collage-mask.psd**



29.5

image until all images have been correctly positioned. After you place all of the images, the **Layers** palette shows the **Background** layer, the **openings layer**, and 11 image layers.

Depending on how you select and position the images, you may find that one or more images overlap another image. If this occurs, make sure Auto Select Layer is turned on by clicking in the box next to it in the Options bar. Then, click the overlapping image by using the Move tool to select it. Click the Lasso tool; then click and draw a selection marquee around the part of the image that you want to remove. Choose **Edit > Cut (Ctrl+X)** to cut the overlapping part of the image. Alternatively, you can create a layer mask and paint out the part of the image that you do not want to show. Or, you can drag and drop layers in the Layers palette so that the order of the images eliminates the overlapped image problem.

STEP 3: FLATTEN IMAGE AND SAVE AS A NEW FILE

- Choose **Layer > Flatten Image**.
- To minimize image size, click the **Square Marquee** tool and drag a selection marquee around all the images. Choose **Image > Crop** to crop the image.
- To save as an optimized .jpg file to be used on a Web page, choose **File > Save For Web** (**Alt+Shift+Ctrl+S**) to get the **Save For Web** dialog box. Select the **JPEG Medium** setting and click **Save**. Name the file and save it in an appropriate folder.

The image is now a mere 52KBs and is ready to be placed on a Web page. **Figure 29.2** shows how the image looks in an Internet browser after an HTML editor has been used to add a title. If you had to create such an image, each week, for weekly action photos, you would simply need to open the collage mask and drag and drop images — it is that easy.