

## TECH SUIT INFORMATION FOR OFFICIALS

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The following rule, proposed by the Age Group Development Committee, will take effect September 1, 2020.

### 102.8 SWIMWEAR

#### .1 Design

- F. No Technical Suit may be worn by any 12 & Under USA Swimming athlete member in competition at any Sanctioned, Approved or Observed meet.
- 1) Exceptions to the foregoing restriction are only for Junior Nationals, US Open, National Championships, and Olympic Trials.
  - 2) A Technical Suit is one that has the following components:
    - a. Any suit with any bonded or taped seams regardless of its fabric or silhouette; or
    - b. Any suit with woven fabric extending past the hips.

(Note: WOVEN FABRIC-A suit with woven fabric and sewn seams that does not extend below the hips is permitted.)

(Note: KNIT FABRIC-A suit with knit fabric and sewn seams not extending below the knees is permitted.)

#### Age Group Development Committee Key Considerations

- Maintaining the status quo will negatively impact swimmer development by continuing to emphasize the suit as a quick (and false) path to success versus long-term skill development, practice, athlete effort and coaching.
- Curbing the over-zealous parent mentality of needing to “keep up with the Joneses” in order to compete.
- The status quo often removes decision-making from the coach to recommend the best long-term development plan for each individual swimmer.
- While cost was less of a factor than initially thought, the committee is mindful of managing the overall cost of participation and its impact on athlete retention.

#### Identification, Approval and Enforcement

Virtually all suits that fall within the definition of restricted tech suits have been through the FINA approval process and bear the FINA approved logo. Therefore, most suits that have the FINA approval logo are **not** legal for competition come September 1, 2020.

There are a handful of suits in the market with the FINA logo that would be considered legal for Age Group competition. These suits will bear an additional green checkmark logo developed by USA Swimming to indicate approval (the two versions are to the right). Each manufacturer must submit a suit to USA Swimming to gain approval to use the checkmark on their suits. This green checkmark will **only appear on suits that have the FINA logo**-it will not be on all approved suits.



All suits with the FINA logo and without the secondary approval logo will be easily identified as a restricted suit for 12 & under competition.

There have been some questions from officials on “closer examination” of a suit. In most cases if a suit has the FINA approval logo it is not legal for 12-Under use. **The burden of knowing if a suit is compliant or not is really on the parent, coach and swimmer.**

### **Communication about the Technical Suit rule**

- USA Swimming's communication department has a comprehensive plan in place on the roll-out of information regarding the new rule.
- There is a special page on our website about the upcoming ban. "Is your Tech Suit-Able?" <https://www.usaswimming.org/news-landing-page/2019/09/12/tech-suit-restriction-for-12-and-under-swimmers>
- Communications shot a 4-minute video of Olympian Leah Smith giving an explanation to parents and coaches of the ban and talking about the different types of suits. It is really good and posted at the website link above.
- Jeff Cummings wrote an article about the suits that came out in an issue of Splash magazine and there are additional articles coming out as well.
- We recorded and released a podcast with Dynamo Associate Head Coach, Beth Winkowski, explaining the ban from a coach's perspective.
- I have been receiving a number of negative comments from disgruntled parents (and a grandparent). I have responded personally to each of them and while they don't necessarily like it, they are at least appreciative of a response. The interesting thing is that virtually all the parents that I have heard from are parents of 11-12-year-olds and they "understand" why the ban should be for 10-Unders, but they feel it shouldn't be for 11-12-year-olds.

### **Additional questions**

- If we see an illegal suit on a swimmer on the blocks, do we stop the meet and allow them to change?

*NO, as we mentioned, the burden is on the parent, coach and swimmer to know if a suit is compliant prior to competition.*

- What if we notice an illegal suit AFTER the race - while the swimmer is still in the water – the race is finished so can there be a DQ?

*NO. It really depends on whether you observed the swimmer while the race was in progress or after it was finished and whether you raised your hand to indicate a potential disqualification. This rule is no different than an illegal touch. Would you call an illegal touch at the finish AFTER the swimmer exited the pool? As they walk away? There has to be a point where you say, "too late." The race is over when the touch is made. Calling an infraction AFTER the race would result in over-officiating.*

- Do we warn swimmers walking around in an illegal suit during warmups?

*NO. It is not illegal to wear a tech suit when not competing. Officials are not the suit police.*

- It is not a DQ unless they swim in the suit - what if it is not noticed until they are finished but the official is positive that they swam a race in the suit?

*Did the official raise his/her hand while the swimmer was still competing in the water before or at the touch? If not, then no call. One LSC that has already implemented the rule allows the swimmer to bring the suit (if it is in question) to the referee for them to look at it once they have changed out of the suit. However, if the swimmer is out of the pool, they are out of your*

*jurisdiction, therefore no call can be made at that time. The recommendation would be that swimmers get a questionable suit approved (or not) prior to the meet starting.*

**What happens if a suit is legal (a parent purchased an older stock), but doesn't have the checkmark?**

Even though we have promoted the upcoming change, there may be instances where a parent purchased an older stock suit that had the FINA approval logo on it but does not have the checkmark on it because a dealer had older stock of the suit. In this instance, the "work around" will be:

1. USA Swimming will have a list of these suits on the website. Currently there are 12 that have been approved (some suits have a child size and an adult size).
2. Swimmer or coach takes the suit to the meet referee prior to the start of the meet (should a swimmer arrive late the swimmer must have the suit approved prior to their event).
3. The tag on the suit has the name of the suit on it and the referee can compare with the list on the website.
4. Referee with a green Sharpie, places an "X" over the FINA approval logo.
5. It is up to the swimmer and/or coach to have this approved prior to them swimming the race.

This will help in the rare instance where a parent purchased a suit that is legal but does not have the checkmark on it due to older stock of the suit. Unfortunately, here is nothing to prevent a coach, swimmer, or parent from putting an "X" on the suit with their own green Sharpie. We must trust that no one would do this.

