

Affiliated to Swim England South East Region and Hampshire County ASA

Racing Costume/Technical Suit Guidance Document

Purpose:

To outline the Club's guidance on use of age and performance appropriate swimwear for Age Group swimmers.

Introduction:

Technical/Performance Race Suits can be very expensive and thus can be considered a barrier to entry for families looking to start competitive swimming. There are **no proven performance benefits** for young swimmers using technical/performance racing suits and the coaching team believe that any perceived benefits of wearing a technical/performance racing suit are not relevant to young swimmers who are at the start of their swimming development.

The development process is a long journey with many ups and downs, and it is important that swimmers concentrate on the application of **technique** and **good completion of training sets** to aid physical development rather than looking for perceived small gains from technical race suits. The Club wish to limit the use of racing suits outside of specifically named competitions as an initiative to remove competitive pressure on young swimmers at a crucial development phase of their swimming journey. Tech Suits cost upwards of £200 and their 'life' in terms of making fractions of seconds difference to elite swimmers is at most 20 swims – thereafter the small difference they make gets even smaller – and that is for only elite athletes. In swimmers below elite level, 'active drag' caused by poor technique far outweighs any perceived gains due to suit drag, provided the suit that is used is well fitted and not baggy.

The club has taken this advice from other clubs in the region (and globally) and we hope other clubs will also take up this initiative.

Recommendations and Club Intent:

The Club has decided to make the following recommendations to swimmers and parents.

Swimmers in all age-group squads (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze, Academy, Swim Fit & Club) should not wear technical/performance race suits at any competition the Club hosts, attends and/or is represented at, except for the meets below where they will be permitted to wear swimwear in line with the FINA by laws 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 (rules governing technical racing suits):

- Swim England South East Swimming Championships (Winter and Summer)
- Swim England South East Swimming Open Water Championships
- Swim England National Open Water Championships
- Swim England Summer Meet
- British Summer Nationals
- *Any Para-Swimming equivalent competitions*

Any variation to the above will need to be authorized by the Head Coach.

September 2019

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Transition – Adherence to Guidelines:

The Club understands that there will need to be a transition period to bring in this new regime as swimmers will already have technical/performance suits that they have purchased, and swimmers and parents will want to make use of them before they degrade and/or the swimmers grow out of them. Considering the short performance life of the suits, it is the Club's intention to start enacting the guidance 1 year from initial publication – i.e. in **September 2020**.

The Club also recognises that we are not able to physically stop swimmers from wearing any suit they want provided it meets the decency requirements set by the sport's governing bodies. The Club will therefore be relying on the good behaviours of its swimmers and parents in supporting this guidance. As is normal in these cases, eventually peer pressure will win out, so early adoption by parents and their swimmers would be greatly appreciated.

Adherence to these guidelines will not only save club members money but will also ensure that tech suits are in the best condition when they are required, which will help our swimmers achieve at their target meets.

What is a Technical / Performance Suit?

Technical/performance racing suits are manufactured using scientifically advanced materials. Materials of this type are normally comprised of spandex and nylon composite fabrics with features to reduce “drag” against the water. The fabrics include features which are highly compressive and increase the swimmers glide through the water and reducing absorption of water by the suit as opposed to regular swimsuits.

Traditional one-piece race suits for females as well as briefs and trunks for male swimmers are not technical/performance suits and will be permitted. Knee length suits and “jammers” will also be permitted provided they do not feature the key components of a technical/performance swimsuit.

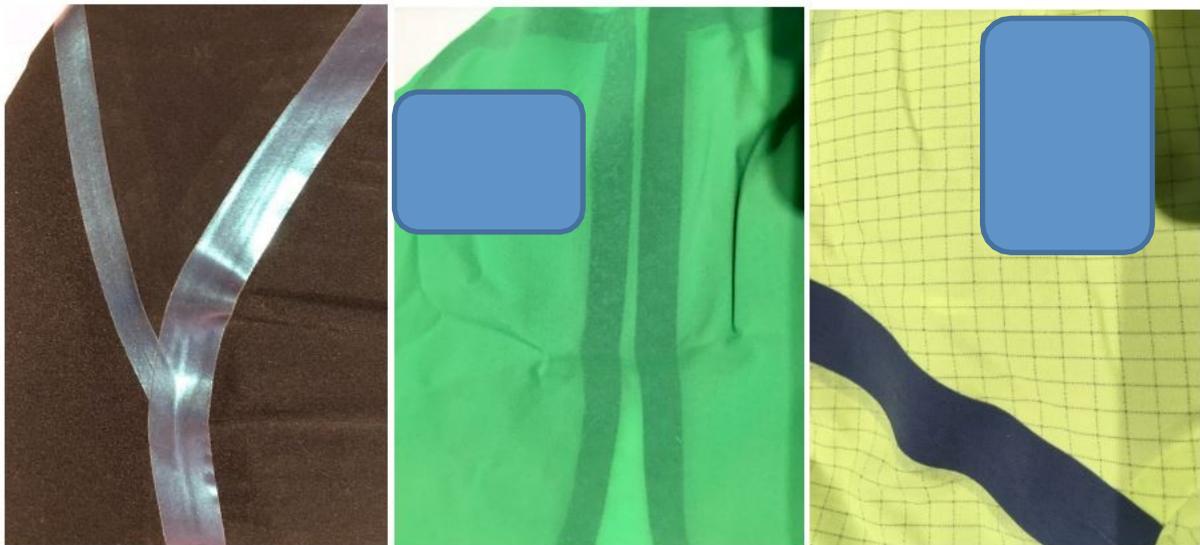
The key component of a technical/performance suits which should be identified when differentiating what is and isn't permitted are the following:

- Bonded / Sealed seams
- Meshed seams
- Kinetic tape

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The above photographs are examples of seaming which will continue to be acceptable for swimmers in **all age-group squads**, note the stitching is raised on the outside of the fabric.



The above photographs are examples of swimsuits which will **no longer be acceptable**

*Due to continued technology improvements and potential rules changes, this policy will be reviewed annually from 2020.

September 2019