

Approved Suits for Competition

Approved Swimsuits for 2010 Effective 1/25/10 (1/25/2010)

The USA Swimming House of Delegates, at its September 2009 meeting, adopted new rules regarding swimwear which limited swimsuits used for competitive purposes to those swimsuits which are in compliance with specifications established by FINA, the international governing body for the sport of swimming.

On January 4, 2010, FINA issued its final list of swimsuits approved for use in 2010. The suits included on this final list were all submitted to and approved by FINA. In addition to the suits included on this list, FINA has indicated that "older suits" are also acceptable for competition. Although the term "older suits" was not specifically defined, it generally refers to suits made from nylon or Lycra that meet the following criteria:

1. Swimsuits for men may not extend above the navel or below the knee and for women may not cover the neck, or extend past the shoulders or below the knee;
2. Material used for swimsuits can be only textile material which is defined as materials consisting of natural and/or synthetic, individual and non-consolidated yarns used to constitute a fabric by weaving, knitting, and/or braiding. Simply put, this would generally refer to suits made only from nylon or Lycra that do not have any rubberized material such as polyurethane or neoprene;
3. No zippers or other fastening devices are allowed except for a waist tie on a brief or jammer.

Although the "older suits", as defined above, are acceptable for competition, they will not be allowable for purposes of establishing World Records, as qualifying times for FINA World Championships or Olympic Games, or for world rankings. Only suits listed on the FINA Suit List may be used for these purposes.

Effective immediately, with the exception of our USA Swimming Championship Meets as defined in Article 207 of the USA Swimming Rulebook (U.S. Open, National and Junior National Championships and Trials Class Meets), swimsuits allowable for use in USA Swimming sanctioned or approved competition must either appear on the [FINA Suit List](#) or meet the definition of an "older suit" as defined above.

For purposes of our USA Swimming Championship Meets, the "older suits" are not allowable and only suits appearing on the FINA Suit List are acceptable for use in competition.

Please be aware that some of the swimsuits on the approved list have the same model names as older suits which do not meet the new technical requirements. We strongly recommend you check with the retailer or suit manufacturer to be sure you are purchasing an approved suit.

The FINA specifications for swimsuit approval included a requirement that all approved suits must include a non-removable marking or label on the swimsuit indicating the swimsuit has been "FINA approved", along with an indication of the approval date. It appears this marking/label will be provided exclusively by FINA and will include some kind of numbering system. The number on the label/marketing will have to be entered on any World Record Application Forms. The marking/label will most likely be on the inside of the suit where it will not be visible to any observer.

As before, officials should assume that any particular suit worn by a swimmer is a legal suit unless it is obvious the suit does not meet any of the three criteria used to define an "older suit" as described above. Any protest regarding the legality of a particular suit should be handled in the same manner as any other protest under the provisions of Article 102.11 of our Rulebook.

We understand and appreciate there will be some challenges associated with the implementation of this and ask everyone to use some common sense as we move forward. If you have questions or need any clarification, please contact me via e-mail at bruce@strattoncpa.com.

Sincerely,
Bruce W. Stratton
Chair, USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee