

Tech Suit Restriction for 12-and-Under Swimmers

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

Changes are coming for swimmers age 12 and under in the USA. Last fall USA Swimming announced a rule change that will ban the use of technical swimwear (tech suits) for youth participants. This new rule will go into effect September 1st, 2020.

102.8 SWIMWEAR

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G. 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.)

This rule is in effect for all USA Swimming competitions in the United States, so any manufacturer or vendor selling a suit in the United States is subject to the above rule. No Technical Suits may be worn by any 12-Under USA Swimming athlete member in competition at any Sanctioned, Approved or Observed meet.

A Technical Suit is one that has the following components:

- Any male or female suit with any bonded or taped seams is defined as a technical suit regardless of its fabric or silhouette.
- Any male or female suit with woven fabric and to the knee or mid-thigh is defined as a technical suit regardless of the type seams: bonded, taped or sewn. (Note: A woven suit with sewn seams and in a male brief or female regular cut not to the knees is not defined as a technical suit and is not restricted).



Age Group Development Committee Restriction on Tech Suits for 12-and-Under Swimmers

Frequently Asked Questions

- Q: Can boys still wear “jammers”? The proposed rule says, “Any male or female suit with woven fabric extending to the knee or mid-thigh is defined as a technical suit...”**
- A:** Boys can still wear jammers. The key phrase in the proposal is “woven fabric”. There are plenty of jammer suits available that are not made of a woven material.
- Q: Can girls still wear suits down to the knees?**
- A:** Girls can still wear suits to the knees. Similar to the question above, there are plenty of female suits available that are not made of a woven material.
- Q: Can a 12-Under swimmer wear a tech suit at an LSC Championship meet or Zone Championships?**
- A:** No. The only meets where a 12-Under will be allowed to wear a tech suit is one that is in USA Swimming’s Championship series of meets (Junior Nationals, US Open, National Championships or U.S. Olympic Trials).
- Q: Can an LSC now make a rule restricting the use of tech suits earlier than the national restriction that goes into place September 1, 2020?**
- A:** The Age Group Development Committee (AGD) spent the last three years looking at the complexity of this issue from all sides in terms of markings, manufacturing, cost, officiating, retail and more to form this recommendation. The AGD strongly recommends LSCs hold any legislation until the national implementation date. This will allow for the proper time period for all aspects of the industry to be ready for the implementation.
- Q: Should LSCs with existing rules “fall in line” with this rule and timing?**
- A:** There was unanimous agreement that for this rule to be effective, it will require consistency nationally. It is the recommendation of the Age Group Development Committee that LSCs match this proposal on definition and timing.
- Q: How does USA Swimming plan to educate parents, coaches and swimmers on what is a technical suit and what isn’t?**
- A:** USA Swimming, with the help of all suit manufacturers, is planning to create an educational piece(s) on suits and what will be legal and what won’t. This campaign will include information to help parents choose the best suit for their young swimmer that is consistent with the American Development Model. USA Swimming will also publish a list of restricted suits.
- Q: What is the marking system to identify a tech suit?**
- A:** The primary identifier will be any suit that has the FINA logo will be considered a tech suit. This will address 99% of the issues today with 12-and-unders and is a marking system that higher-level officials are accustomed to seeing. It is easily identifiable even at a busy meet and does not require any additional cost or production for manufacturers. This will also keep consumer costs lower without adding additional steps in manufacturing.
- Q: Are there some suits with the FINA logo that could still work for 12-and-unders?**
- A:** There are currently a small number of suits (less than 5 today) that have a FINA logo but do not meet the definition of a tech suit. Those suits will require an additional visual mark (ex. a bright check mark surrounded by a circle) to signify it is ok for 12-and-under competition.
- Q: Are there suits that don’t have a FINA logo, but are still considered a tech suit?**
- A:** In the event that a manufacturer chooses not to go through FINA approval on a suit that meets the definition of a tech suit, an additional mark signifying it is not allowed for 12-and-unders will be used. Currently, no companies have a suit in this category.
- Q: If, for example, a 12-year-old is entered in an open/senior meet that is not on the list of exempted meets (i.e. an LSC Senior meet or an Open Invitational) how would an official know that they shouldn’t be wearing a technical suit since there isn’t an age classification for the meet or event?**
- A:** Because most heat sheets list the age of the athlete, it should be relatively easy at the beginning of the meet for the meet referee to look through the heat sheet and identify any 12-Under swimmers entered in the meet/events. The officials would then need to ensure that those swimmers are not competing in a suit with the FINA logo on it. The burden is really on swimmers, parents and coaches to comply with all rule changes.