



1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO  
80909-5770

o 719.866.4578  
f 719.866.4669

usaswimming.org

Bruce W. Stratton  
398 S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 290  
Boise, ID 83702-6066

o 208-336.4953  
f 208-342.8962

bruce@strattoncpa.com

September 21, 2009

To: All members of USA Swimming  
From: Bruce W. Stratton, Chair, USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee  
Subject: Important new rules regarding swimsuits

---

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of important rule changes relating to swimsuits worn in all USA Swimming sanctioned and approved competition, or in any observed swim. These new rules, which are effective October 1, 2009, significantly change the types of swimsuits which may be worn in competition.

In July, 2009, FINA, the international governing body for the sport of swimming, adopted new rules effective January 1, 2010, which specify the design and construction of swimsuits which may be used in competition. USA Swimming, as the national governing body for the sport of swimming in the United States, has a long standing policy of following rules established by FINA. Accordingly, the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee changed USA Swimming's rules to conform to those of FINA. However, the USA Swimming House of Delegates subsequently passed a motion making these new swimsuit rules effective on October 1, 2009, three months earlier than the FINA effective date.

Attached are the amended rules relating to swimwear. Also attached is a copy of the FINA press release which lists in detail the specifications required for the approval of swimsuits. It will be necessary to reference this press release as to what constitutes an approved suit.

The new swimsuit requirements are very specific and technical in nature, but the most obvious restrictions/rules are as follows:

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 fabric 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; and
3. No zippers or other fastening devices are allowed except for a waist tie on a brief or jammer.

Many of the swimsuits currently being used by swimmers will no longer be allowable under the new rules and care should be taken when purchasing a suit to ensure it does meet the new requirements.

If you have any questions regarding the application of these new rules, please feel free to contact me (bruce@strattoncpa.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce W. Stratton', written over a horizontal line.

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

# **AMENDED USA SWIMMING RULES & REGULATIONS REGARDING SWIMWEAR**

(Effective October 1, 2009)

## **102.9 SWIMWEAR**

### **.1 Design**

- A. Swimwear shall include only a swimsuit, cap and goggles. Armbands or leg bands shall not be regarded as parts of the swimsuit and are not allowed.
- B. In swimming competitions, the competitor must wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces except as provided in 205.10.1. All swimsuits shall be made from textile materials. For men, the swimsuit shall not extend above the navel nor below the knees, and for women, shall not cover the neck, extend past the shoulder, nor extend below the knee.
  - .1 Exemptions to the foregoing restriction may be granted to a swimmer, on a case by case basis, by the Chair of the Rules & Regulations Committee, or his/her designee. Exemptions will be granted only for conflicts due to the swimmer's verified religious beliefs or verified medical conditions.
  - .2 Procedures for applying for an exemption will be established by the Rules & Regulations Committee and posted on the USA Swimming website.
  - .3 No exemption to this restriction will be granted for a swimsuit that will give the swimmer a competitive advantage.
  - .4 The decision of the Rules Chair may be appealed only to the entire Rules & Regulations Committee whose decision shall be final and binding on all parties.
- C. Only swimsuits complying with FINA swimsuit specifications may be worn in any USA Swimming sanctioned or approved competition.
- D. Swimsuits worn for competition must be non-transparent and conform to the current concept of the appropriate.
- E. No swimmer is permitted to wear or use any device, substance or swimsuit to help his/her speed, pace, buoyancy or endurance during a race (such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, etc.). Goggles may be worn, and rubdown oil applied if not considered excessive by the Referee. Any kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the Referee.
- F. The Referee shall have the authority to bar offenders from the competition until they comply with the rule.

**202.4. REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL** — Approval of competition may be issued, withheld or withdrawn by an LSC in accordance with the following regulations:

.4 No competition shall be approved unless a sufficient number of USA Swimming officials, certified by the LSC at a minimum of Stroke and Turn level, are present to observe and certify that the conduct of competition and all times achieved in such competition were in conformance with all applicable USA Swimming technical rules including, but not limited to, the following:

A Article 101 (all) or Article 105 or Article 701	Start, individual stroke and relay rules (Disability) (Open Water)
B 102.2.2 & 3	Entry limit per day
C 102.9.1A, B, C and E	Swimsuit restrictions
D 102.16.4 A (1) & (2)	Requirements for official time/performance
E 102.16.4 B & C	Timing Resolution (including table)
F 103.2.3, 103.3.1, 103.4 103.12.1 & 2 and 103.14 or Article 702 (Open Water)	Minimum standards for facilities

**202.5 REQUIREMENTS FOR OBSERVED SWIMS** — Swims may be observed by assigned USA Swimming officials for conformance with USA Swimming technical rules in a meet conducted under other than USA Swimming rules. Official times achieved as observed swims may be submitted for entry into the SWIMS database if all of the following conditions are met:

- .1 *no change*
- .2 *no change*
- .3 At least two USA Swimming observers, who shall be certified Stroke & Turn Judges assigned or approved by the LSC, must be present, one at each end of the course, to verify compliance of the swim or swims, when blanket observed (all swims observed), with USA Swimming rules specified in 202.4.4A, C, D and E and 103.3.1. An individual swim being observed requires notification to the observers prior to the start of the competition. The times should be entered, upon request, into SWIMS, the National Times Database

**205.10 SWIMWEAR IN AGE GROUP COMPETITION (effective 9/19/09)**

- .1 For age group competitions, it is permissible for an athlete to wear a single set of garments underneath his or her competition swimsuit for modesty and/or privacy reasons.

# PRESS RELEASE

## N°59/2009



### FINA BUREAU MEETING Rome (ITA) - July 31, 2009

**Rome (ITA), July 31, 2009** – The FINA Bureau met today in Rome (ITA) and approved the final list of FINA Commissions and Committees for the period 2009-2013. For each of the technical committees of the five FINA aquatic disciplines, the number of members was increased from 12 to 15. This new composition is aimed at supporting the development of FINA sports in the five continents and is due to the improvement of the number of affiliated FINA National Federations worldwide, which is actually of 201.

These new technical committees will meet before the end of the year to establish their four- year plan of activities, to be presented at the next FINA Bureau meeting on January 15-16, 2010 in Bangkok (THA).

Moreover, the Bureau reconfirmed its position in relation with the requirements for swimwear approval, reinforcing the decision of the Congress on July 24, 2009. These rules include the following conditions for swimwear approval:

Surface covered: Men swimsuit shall not extend above the navel nor below the knee and for women shall not cover the neck or extend past the shoulders nor shall extend below the knee.

Type of material: The material used for swimsuits can be only "Textile Fabric(s)" defined for the purpose of these rules as material consisting of, natural and/or synthetic, individual and non consolidated yarns used to constitute a fabric by weaving, knitting, and/or braiding.

Surface treatment of the textile fabric: Any material added on to the surface of the textile fabric (e.g. coating, printing, impregnation) shall not close the original open mesh structure of the base textile fabric. The treated material shall further comply with all requirements in particular in regard to thickness, permeability and flexibility. This part of the rule does not apply to logos and labels. This applies to both the manufacturing level and the actual use of the swimsuit.

Flexibility: the material shall be flexible and soft-folding.

Regular flat material: The material shall be regular and flat. The material shall not form outstanding shapes or structures, such as scales.

Outside application: No outside application shall be added on the material.

Variety of materials: Different materials may be used in one swimsuit provided they are textile fabrics as defined above and they comply with all other criteria including notably thickness and permeability (measures to apply to total layers). Combination of materials shall further not create outstanding shape(s) or structure(s). Layered materials must be completely attached/bound/stuck together except where required to protect sensitive parts ("privacy layers").

Thickness: The material used shall have a maximum thickness of 0.8mm. It is clarified that this maximum thickness does not apply to seams as far as they are functional and their thickness and width result from their natural function.

Buoyancy: The swimsuit shall not have a buoyancy effect above 0.5 Newton measured after application of vacuum.

Permeability: Material(s) used must have at any point a permeability value of more than 80 l/m<sup>2</sup>/second. Permeability values are measured on material with a standard multidirectional stretch of 25 %. However, measure on material which cannot be significantly stretched will be effected on unstretched flattened material.

Construction: No zippers or other fastening system is allowed. Seams shall be limited to functional systems and shall not create outside shapes.

External stimulation or influence: Swimsuits which include any system providing external stimulation or influence of any type, including pain reduction, chemical/medical substance release, electro-stimulation etc. are prohibited.

Consistency: Swimsuits effectively manufactured and used shall correspond to and be fully consistent with submitted samples. Any modification before use (including impregnation) is prohibited.

Customisation: There shall be no variation/modification for individual swimmers from the models corresponding to the samples submitted for approval.

The new requirements for swimwear approval will be enforced from **January 1, 2010**. The list of approved swimsuits by FINA Executive on June 19, 2009 and published on the FINA website, is valid until December 31, 2009.

Approval of swimwear in the future will be done at least 12 months before the next FINA World Championships (50m) or Olympic Games. Moreover, the manufacturers will have the responsibility of making those models available on the market (available on sale to Federations and competitors) at least six months prior to the next coming FINA World Championships or Olympic Games.

As announced by FINA President Dr Julio Maglione, the Bureau appointed a Commission led by Prof. Jan-Anders Manson (from EPFL in Lausanne, SUI) and formed by scientific experts and an athlete's representative to control the swimwear approval process and to monitor the development of the swimsuit industry based on the rules established by the FINA Bureau and the measurable scientific tests on buoyancy and permeability.