



Racing Suit Guidance

PURPOSE

To outline LHSS's guidance on use of age and performance related swimwear for age group swimmers.

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that wearing a specifically designed racing suit gives swimmers an advantage during competition, but it is important to remember that the swimmer makes the suit fast not the other way around.

THE SCIENCE

Racing suits have water repellent properties that help the swimmer cut through the water and the approved material compresses the muscles to improve streamlining and reduce drag. The more times the suit is worn the more it stretches and degrades. Active drag from poor technique far outweighs any perceived gains. Physically mature bodies benefit the greatest from racing suits.

WHEN TO CONSIDER MAKING A PURCHASE

Swimmers should race in training standard suits when they start to compete. Once the level of competition warrants the added advantage swimmer and parents may consider choosing a racing suit carefully.

FITTING

Each brand, and even models within brands, can be sized differently. It is therefore vitally important that the swimmer has a professional fitting rather than buying blind off the internet.

If the suit has wrinkles, creases or gaps then it is too big. If this occurs in the smallest size the swimmer is not ready for a racing suit.

Racing suits should be (as a guide, two sizes) smaller than a training suit, difficult and timely to put on and not particularly comfortable to wear for long periods of time.

CORRECT USE

Ideally swimmers should wear a dry suit for each race and for the shortest time possible. However, at club level this ideology is not usually possible, and we must adapt, but still educate. If swimmers must wear their racing suit in warm up a baggy training suit must be worn over the top.

TYPES OF RACING SUIT

Racing suits can be expensive, and the cost does not relate to how long they will last. Racing suits are not chlorine resistant and they are paper thin.

Technical advances are continuously being introduced but at present there are:

1. **Entry level racing suits** ie TYR Fusion. These are suitable as a first racing suit and are reasonably priced.
2. **Mid range racing suit** have flat locked seams and are aimed at County level and above.
3. **Technical racing suits** with taped seams are aimed at Regional/National swimmers. These can cost in excess of £400.

SUMMARY

- Swimmers do not need a racing suit
- A racing suit does not make you a good swimmer
- There is no rush to invest in your first racing suit (better late than early)
- If the racing suit is not skin-tight it is not worth wearing
- You must be fitted professionally – this service is available at most Open Meets and at Swimstop in Waterloooville
- You must care for your racing suit as per instructions
- Racing suits must be FINA approved
- Swimmers should not wear racing suits at LHSS Time Trials

If you have any questions, please discuss with Lynda who will help guide you to the best purchase option.

Due to development and potential rule changes this guidance will be reviewed annually or earlier if necessary.

(USA Swimming have voted to ban the use of technical racing suits by 12 years and under swimmers (except at National events) with effect from Sep 2020)