



SWIMMING CANTERBURY WEST COAST

Technical/Performance Race Suit Policy

The Swimming Canterbury West Coast Board, in consultation with the Canterbury Coaches Group, and in the interests of athlete development and retention, are instituting the Technical/Performance Race Suit Policy.

The policy will limit the use of Technical/Performance Race Suits by all competitors 12 years of age and under, at SCWC sanctioned events.

This follows the introduction of similar policies in Western Australia, Victoria along with several States in the USA and the Brazilian Swimming Federation, whose research indicates that much of the benefit of wearing a technical/performance suit is not relevant to young swimmers who have yet to physically develop. Manufacturers do not design technical swim suits for young swimmers, rather they are designed for older athletes. One of the main benefits of wearing a technical suit is muscle compression, and children, who are not yet developed, are not impacted by this benefit. There is no documented evidence that supports any performance benefits of technical suits for athletes 12 years and under.

Technical/Performance suits can also be very expensive, and this may provide a potential barrier to entry for families looking to start out in swimming - there is enough financial pressure on parents without adding unnecessary purchases.

The Swimming Canterbury West Coast Technical/Performance Race Suits Policy outlined below, will come into effect on **1st January 2019**.

What is Swimming Canterbury West Coast's Policy:

Effective the 1st January 2019, swimmers aged 12 Years and under will no longer be permitted to wear Technical/Performance race suits at any Swimming Canterbury West Coast sanctioned competition

Does this apply in other regions, or at National meets?

To date Auckland Swimming Association have already introduced a similar policy in their Region, and other Regions are also considering this, so athletes are reminded to check regional policies before competing at an out of region meet.

Swimming New Zealand are not invoking a national policy on Technical/Performance suits for 12 years and under swimmers, so they will still be able to be worn by SCWC 12 years and under swimmers at Swimming New Zealand meets, such as the Junior Festival, Division II Championships and National Age Groups.

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 swimmer's glide through 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 swim suit will also be permitted.

What are the key components of a Technical/Performance suit?

The key components 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

Technical Swim Suits have bonded seams, kinetic tape or meshed seams. Only swim suits that have all stitched seams will be permitted to be worn.

PERMITTED

The above photographs are examples of seaming which will continue to be **permitted for swimmers aged 12**



years and under, note the stitching is raised on the outside of the fabric.

NO LONGER PERMITTED AS OF 1/1/2019



*The above photographs are examples of swim suit seaming which **will no longer be permitted for swimmers aged 12 years and under**. Note the bonded/sealed seams and use of kinetic tape.*

PLEASE NOTE- THE ABOVE PICTURES ARE EXAMPLES OF SEAMING ONLY. THE BRANDS AND STYLES DEPICTED ARE **NOT THE ONLY BRANDS OR STYLES TO WHICH THE NEW POLICY WILL APPLY.**

If you are unsure whether the suit you currently have, or are considering purchasing, will be permitted, please check with the retailer, or contact the Regional Administrator for advice.

How will this change be implemented?

Swimming Canterbury West Coast will host a formal education session for Technical Officials and Coaches to assist all parties to accurately identify the difference between the two types of suits. Swimmers will be monitored throughout all Swimming Canterbury West Coast sanctioned meets and will be asked to change into a complying swim suit if required.

Next Steps

Clubs and Coaches, please communicate these changes to your membership over the coming months. Swimming Canterbury West Coast have delayed the enforcement of this new rule to ensure that pre-purchased technical/performance suits can continue to be utilized throughout the 2017/18 Season.

Signed: 
Chairperson, Swimming Canterbury West Coast Board

Date: 9 April 2018

Review date: 25 March 2019