

Swim Ireland Tech Suit Policy (as of 1st September 2020)

Swim Ireland Definition of a 'Tech Suit'

A tech suit is defined as one that has the following components:

1. Manufactured using fabric with water-repellent properties
2. Manufactured using any bonded or taped seams regardless of its fabric

Swim Ireland will consider a tech suit to be one which appears on FINA's 'Approved Swimwear' List. This list is available on the FINA website and is regularly updated. A suit which appears on the FINA 'Approved Swimwear' List is embossed with the FINA logo as such. Please visit <http://www.fina.org/content/fina-approved-swimwear>

Tech Suits & Young Athletes

It is unclear how much of a performance advantage wearing a tech suit makes at a young age as the greatest performance advantage from such a suit comes from the compression that the suit provides in streamlining the body to reduce frontal resistance. For this to occur, the suit needs to be extremely tight fitting. A tech suit will deteriorate after only a few competitions, depending on how many times it is worn. The more times it is worn, the more it stretches, and the more the compression and water repellent properties degrade

Swim Ireland Rationale

1. Effective stroke technique and high skill levels are a much more important component for swimming fast over and above that of the suit worn and athletes should be encouraged to improve their body position, streamlining, underwater kick speed and technique at a young age in order to continue their progression in later years
2. The focus for young age group athletes should be less on results and more on developing a love for the sport
3. Children should feel and understand that it is their training, commitment and application to the sport that makes a difference when they compete, not the competition suit that they wear
4. Tech suits are very expensive. We want our sport to be inclusive and this rationale facilitates this

It is the responsibility of Regions, clubs and coaches to educate athletes and parents on the rationale supporting this policy

Swim Ireland Ruling (Effective as of 1st September 2020):

1. Athletes aged 13 years old and younger (age as that prescribed by each meet's entry conditions) will not be permitted to compete in a tech suit in any swimming competition which falls under the jurisdiction of Swim Ireland – all Swim Ireland licensed/sanctioned meets on the island of Ireland
2. There are no tech suit restrictions for athletes aged 14 years old and over in any competition

The following statement must be added to the meet conditions/information for all competitions in Ireland:

“Athletes aged 13 years and younger (age as defined in the meet conditions) will not be permitted to compete at this meet in a tech suit. A tech suit is defined as any male or female swimsuit appearing on FINA's Approved Swimwear List. Athletes aged 13 years and under will be disqualified if officials observe such an athlete competing in a suit embossed with the FINA logo (i.e. a suit from the FINA Approved Swimwear List)”

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