



## Harpenden Swimming Club – Technical Race Suit Policy

In line with a request from Swim England Hertfordshire, Harpenden Swimming Club will be implementing a restriction on those swimmers who can wear technical race suits at County, Regional and National competitions.

This will affect swimmers who will be 10, 11 or 12 years old at the end of the calendar year of competition (age at 31<sup>st</sup> December), and they will not be allowed to race in technical suits. For example, a swimmer who is 12 on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 will not be allowed to race in a technical suit at Counties, Regionals or Nationals 2020.

Technical suits are an expensive investment and can be considered a barrier to competitive swimming. Swimmers and therefore parents can feel pressure from an early stage to keep up with the latest trends in race suits. In fact, there are no proven performance benefits for young swimmers using technical racing suits. It is more important that swimmers focus on their technique and completing the sets they are given in training to a high standard in order to improve rather than putting emphasis on a technical race suit for improved performance. Poor technique will outweigh any perceived benefits from a technical suit in a competition environment.

Identification of a technical race suit is as per the below:

*“suits that have bonded seams, kinetic tape or meshed seams”*

Any suit that does not have all stitched seams will be deemed a technical suit.

Swim England Hertfordshire set out the following rationale for a technical suit restriction, with which we as a club wholly agree:

- A technical suit will not make a difference to the results of a younger swimmer. In these swimmers, good technique is and should be a much more important factor in swimming faster.
- The focus for younger age groups should be less on results and more on enjoying the sport and competition. Technical suits put more emphasis on the result.
- The swimmers at these ages should feel and understand that it is their own time and work that makes a difference when they compete, not what they wear.
- Technical suits are expensive. We want to have an inclusive environment where every young swimmer feels able to compete on a level playing field.
- In many cases with young swimmers, a tight training costume (perhaps one size smaller than usual) gives a better advantage than a specifically designed race suit that doesn't fit correctly.
- For swimmers in these age groups, this introduces the concept of 100% ME... a very important lesson.



Swimmers in these age groups will be allowed to wear traditional swimming costumes and trunks, and knee length suits and jammers as long as they do not feature bonded or meshed seams or kinetic tape. Suits with flatlock seams or sewn seams on these suits will be acceptable.

We recognise that as a club we can't physically stop swimmers wearing anything they like that complies with the rules of the governing body. We will therefore be relying on the swimmers and parents of the club to adhere to this restriction.

Please see below some ideas of suits that are/are not allowed under this. If you have any questions please bring suits in and we can have a chat!

Examples of technical suits:

- <https://www.mailsports.co.uk/fuse-kneeskin-finis>  
<https://www.mailsports.co.uk/fuse-jammer-black>  
description note *bonded seams*
- <https://www.mailsports.co.uk/lzr-pure-valor-openback-kneeskin>  
<https://www.mailsports.co.uk/lzr-pure-valor-jammer>  
description notes *flat bonded seams*
- <https://www.mailsports.co.uk/women-s-powerskin-carbon-air-open-back-fina-approved>  
<https://www.mailsports.co.uk/men-s-powerskin-carbon-air-jammer-fina-approved>  
description notes *a single piece of fabric for zero stitching*

Examples of non-technical suits:

- <https://www.mailsports.co.uk/funkita-viper-jet-stream>  
description notes *flatlock seams*
- <https://www.mailsports.co.uk/arena-powerskin-limited-edition-kneeskin-womens>  
<https://www.mailsports.co.uk/arena-mens-limited-edition-powerskin>  
description notes *all seams are flatlock*
- <https://www.mailsports.co.uk/firststrike-women-s-black-kneeskin>  
<https://www.mailsports.co.uk/firststrike-men-s-black-jammer>  
description notes *flatlock seam construction*
- <https://www.mailsports.co.uk/women-s-powerskin-st-2-0-open-back-48605>  
<https://www.mailsports.co.uk/powerskin-st-2-0-lime-green>  
description notes *ergonomic flatlock seams*