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Dubai Charter on FINA requirements for Swimsuit approval

What does this mean for British Swimmers?

As the World governing body for aquatic sports, FINA has the authority and responsibility to issue regulations applying to its five disciplines. This includes the determination of the specifications applying to sport equipment.

Following a meeting of the FINA Bureau in Dubai, the Bureau decided to revise the requirements for swimwear approval with a view to making them clearer, simple and transparent. To that end, they issued a 4-page document entitled the "Dubai Charter" which came into **immediate effect** (from Saturday 14th March 2009).

However, the Dubai Charter does not solely concern the methodology that FINA will henceforth adopt for the approval of swimwear (which primarily will impact upon manufacturers); it also includes information as to permitted swimwear, which has a very direct and immediate effect upon British swimmers.

The Dubai Charter also puts into place a second round of changes which will be applicable from 1st October 2009 (and applied to swimwear from 1st January 2010) relating to the design and approval of swimwear

The full charter can be found on:

<http://www.fina.org/project/images/help/the%20dubai%20charter.pdf>

The by-laws also reflect some of the changes. These can be found at:

http://www.fina.org/project/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=44&Itemid=119

By way of summary of the key current changes:

By-Law 8 SWIMWEAR

- BL 8.1 All FINA approved swimwear to be used at the Olympic Games and FINA World Championships must be approved by FINA at least twelve (12) months prior to the start of the respective competition. In addition, it must be available for all competitors by 1st January of the year of the Olympic Games or FINA World Championships.
- BL 8.2 In swimming competitions, the competitor must wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces which shall not cover the neck, extend past the shoulder, nor past the ankle. No additional items, like arm bands or leg bands shall be regarded as parts of a swimsuit.

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GR 5.3 is also to be read as permitting the wearing of only one swimsuit.

For all British Swimming events, the above has been adopted with immediate effect. This means that competitors may only wear **one swimsuit** in one or two pieces which shall not cover the neck, **extend past the shoulder**, nor past the ankle. No additional items, like arm bands or leg bands shall be regarded as parts of a swimsuit.

Please note in particular the wording in bold italics which highlights rather significant changes.

For Masters events, however, the phrase 'extend past the shoulder' shall be amended to read 'extend past the wrist'. In addition the rule concerning the brand of costume does not apply.

The ASA, WASA and SASA shall each be considering their own rules in light of the changes and shall in the near future take their proposals for compliance to their respective Boards. The ASA has already indicated that its proposal to Board shall be for its regulation 411 ("Costumes") to be amended to follow the wording of FINA by-law 8.2, with effect from 1st September 2009. In the meantime, however, the current wording of regulation 411 still applies.

On a general note, swimmers are advised to be vigilant when purchasing suits to ensure that they are currently approved by FINA and compliant with the new changes. The Dubai Charter states that it will publish a list of approved models and swimmers may in due course wish to consult this in advance of any future purchase.

In any event, further amendments may (if necessary) be issued by FINA over the coming years and it is important for all involved in the sport to at all times be aware of the current requirements in place.

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