

With several parents recently asking our staff about racing and technical suits, we would like to take a moment to clarify our stance and provide some perspective on the subject.

The easiest way to explain what suits should be worn at in season meets, may be to look at the next level of swimming above age group and high school swimming, collegiate swimming. To get a first-hand look at collegiate swimming, you could take a day trip to a nearby university and watch an in-season dual meet. Not only might you get the chance to see some of the fastest swimmers in your area or in the country, but you may also be shocked at what suits these swimmers are wearing at the meet.

In age group swimming, parents and swimmers seem to have the mindset that they should be wearing the fastest suit possible at every meet. However in collegiate swimming the swimmers often wear the same exact suit they practice in every day. This may be shocking to you if you have only attended age group meets.

What may also shock you is the fact that the suit manufacturers value the exposure that collegiate programs provide so greatly, that they will sponsor the university swim team and give them top of the line suits for little-to-no cost whenever needed. This means that if the coaches want their swimmers to put on a \$500 suit at any meet, they have the ability do so. So the question is “why are these swimmers not wearing that \$500 suit at the in season meet?”

The simple answer is that the coaches understand that not every meet is the best opportunity to set a record time. At most in-season swim meets, the swimmers are training very intensely and their bodies are not at the optimum level of performance (although they sometimes do go best times at these dual meets). So why would they swim at these meets if they are not going to go best times?

Every meet is an opportunity to learn race strategies and prepare for the championship meet. During in-season meets, swimmers learn what the best strategy is for their races, as well learn to evaluate their performance in practice based of meet results. The goal is for each swimmer to gain enough valuable racing experience that they can go to their team’s championship meet and apply what they’ve learned throughout the season (hopefully equating to a personal best time).

So what suit should your swimmer be wearing at your local in-season meets? The best answer is to ask your coach. Here at PCST, we encourage our swimmers in all groups to wear the “team suit”. If a swimmer in Age Group 2 or higher would like a slightly more advanced suit, we recommend the AquaBlade, which has consistently been one of the better racing suits for over 20 years.

It should also be noted that the textile based racing suits are best used for certain body types. In age group swimming (specifically 12 & under), most swimmers do not yet need the compression and water flow designs provided by these suits. In addition, age group swimmers are best served by learning that hard work and proper technique are the tools used to achieve best times, not something that comes out of a box.

When should your swimmer wear a textile based racing suit? Again the best answer is to talk to your swimmer’s coach. If your swimmer wants to wear one of these advanced suits, our coaching staff

recommends that they wear it only at “team focus” or championship meets. Saving these suits for the right time will help give your swimmer a mental edge and confidence that could help boost their performance.