**Technical suits**

Does my swimmer *need* a technical suit for championship meets? The short answer is no. Our team suit is used for almost all of our meets – always check with your coach before wearing a tech suit. But, I can assure you that your swimmer will want one- they’re gorgeous, pricey, and have a limited lifespan.

USA Swimming determines the rules for technical suit usage- what can be used, by whom, and when.

12 & Under swimmers cannot use technical suits as of September 2020:
Any suit without a FINA logo is approved for 12 and under.

This rule is in effect for all USA Swimming competitions in the United States, so any manufacturer or vendor selling a suit in the United States is subject to the above rule. No Technical Suits may be worn by any 12-Under USA Swimming athlete member in competition at any Sanctioned, Approved or Observed meet.

Below, are my thoughts as a parent and a coach about tech suits.

1. It is entirely up to each family if a tech suit is purchased, or even considered, for their swimmer.  These suits are expensive and must be gently handled or rips will occur.  In order to provide a benefit, the suit must have a tight fit (which makes it difficult to put on and remove without tearing) so your swimmer will grow out of it quickly. Plus, they do not last for many swims as the fabric wears out quickly.  Some families give them as birthday or holiday gifts, or as a reward.  Secondhand suits from someone you know has only used it a couple of times may be a good alternative if it still provides a tight fit and has no rips. Also, check clearance sites for last year’s styles as the savings can be substantial.

2. At championship meets, most swimmers will be wearing tech suits.    Your swimmer will be swimming against these swimmers.  If swimmers believe that they will swim faster with a tech suit, then we have a mental game with the tech suit, and they might very well swim faster with the tech suit.  Just not necessarily because of the tech suit.

3. Tech suits do make a physical difference by increasing buoyancy, reducing drag, and increasing one's streamline (the last because you are squeezed into the suit.)  But, that difference is very small.  So, it is critical to elite athletes who deal in thousandths of a second and who have incredible technique and speed.  And it may be important to other technically strong and very fast swimmers who are looking to achieve a cut.  For most swimmers, the suit will make a negligible difference.

4. If your swimmer is very close to a qualifying time for a championship meet or to a specific goal that is important to them this year, then you might consider this purchase.  These swimmers should be able to tell you the goal time, their current times and splits, and their specific plans for achieving this - they have been taught that these are necessary for goal-setting. But, this does not mean that they need a technical suit.

5. No one should be talking you into a technical suit purchase, nor should they be talking you into the more or most expensive of these suit options. At a good swim store, you should be given guidance on what is most appropriate for your swimmer’s needs and your budget. Your swimmer should also be taught how to put on the suit, and this can take 20-45 minutes.

Coach Tammy