



Tech Suits for Dummies

The 2022 primer for newbies and the somewhat confused

The national ban on bonded seam and woven suits for swimmers 12 years and under (12U) took effect September 1, 2020. Please see the full rules at the USA Swimming.

<https://www.usaswimming.org/news/2020/08/24/tech-suit-restriction-for-12-and-under-swimmers>

THE NEW RULE

Swimmers aged 12 years and younger cannot wear “Tech Suits”. A “Tech Suit” is defined as:

1. Any suit made of woven fabric which extends past the hips such as kneeskins and jammers.
2. Any suit with bonded seams, as opposed to sewn seams.

Fabrics: *Knitted fabric* is a two-sided fabric used for introductory tech suits. These fabrics have more stretch than woven fabrics.

Woven fabrics are either a very thin “papery” fabric or a heavier compressive fabric.

Seams: *Sewn seams* are used on introductory suits and thus legal for 12U swimmers.

Bonded seams – or glued seams - are used on upper level tech suits and thus illegal for 12U swimmers.

THE FINA LOGO

FINA is the *Fédération Internationale de Natation*, the world-wide governing body of competitive swimming. It is recognized by our own USA Olympic Committee. Over the past years, the FINA logo (below left) was imprinted on racing suits to show they were FINA approved.

With the introduction of the 12U Compliancy rule, things have changed. Only “Tech Suits”, those suits which are approved for 13 and older swimmers, will bear the FINA logo. All 12U compliant suits will NOT have the FINA logo, thus making it easier for officials to determine the legality of a suit at a glance.

However, suit vendors and dealers still have “legal” suits on their shelves which bear the FINA logo. USA Swimming has determined that an additional logo of their own design, a green check in a circle, should be imprinted near the original FINA logo to clearly indicate that the suit is legal for 12U swimmers.



Last year most local swim committees took a very lenient approach to the presence of the FINA logo on the suits of 12U swimmers. However, this situation will change and 12U swimmers will need to wear suits with either no FINA logo, or suits with the FINA logo and the new logo with the green check.

THE SUITS - SIZING

An important fact for those new to the tech suit world is to understand that the sizing runs usually differ from those of practice or team suits. Thus a 28 in a practice suit will not be the same size as a 28 in a tech suit. Your swimmer will usually take a smaller size, and most likely go down two, three or even more sizes.

Some suits have sizing runs that begin at size 16, and others at size 22. Some have odd number sizes - 23, 25, 27, 29, in addition to even number sizes.



All of us at Toad Hollow firmly believe that tech suits should be approached beginning with the introductory suits and graduating to the more advanced (and more expensive) technology as the swimmer grows and matures. Below is a guide to tech suits that we sell at Toad Hollow, and the order in which we suggest they should be approached.



Suits in Level One are made of knitted fabrics as opposed to the woven fabrics of Level Two. Knitted fabrics have four-way stretch capabilities and are less expensive. Swimmers must size down to ensure both a good fit and as many wearings as possible.

Suits in Level One must not bear a FINA logo, but if the FINA logo is present, the suit must also have the additional logo of the green check to indicate legality for 12U swimmers.

SPEEDO

Aquablade

The original and still a winner- the Aquablade was the first offering by Speedo in the tech suit market. The fabric is a color-on-color stripe with a very silky feel. Available in classic Recordbreaker, Jammer, and Brief.

Vanquisher

The new knit fabric suit with sewn seams offers more compression than the Aquablade. It is only available in Kneeskins and Jammers. New colors are available with each season.

TYR

Fusion 2

Equivalent to Speedo's Aquablade, TYR's Fusion differs in that it also is available in a 12U Compliant Kneeskin. Its silhouettes include the classic Aerofit (Discontinued), Kneeskin, Jammer, and Brief (Discontinued).

Thresher 2

Equivalent to Speedo's Vanquisher, the more compressive Thresher is available in various colors and prints. Available in classic Aerofit (Discontinued), Kneeskin, Jammer, and Brief (Discontinued).

ARENA

Powerskin ST

The Powerskin ST (Powerskin is used by Arena to describe all their tech suits) is available in a variety of colors and many limited releases of nice prints. Available in Classic suit, Kneeskin, Jammer, Brief.

BLUESEVENTY

Nero Stitch

Blueseventy just released their new 12U compliant suit, the Stitch. Available in a kneeskin and jammer, it is yet another well-made and well-priced tech suit from B70.



Level Two suits are made of woven fabrics with bonded seams. Woven fabrics are incredibly lightweight and do not hold water. Because they lack the stretch of the knitted fabrics of Level One, they are more difficult to put on. However, this lack of stretch does have a distinct advantage in that it limits water absorption and provides compression. Research has shown that compressed muscles perform more efficiently.

Even with reduced stretch, it is best to size down to a very tight fit to allow the swimmer to wear the suit as many times as possible.

Level Two suits, with their woven fabrics and bonded seams, are labeled as “Tech Suits” by USA Swimming and thus are NOT legal for 12U swimmers. All will bear the FINA logo.

SPEEDO

Pure Intent

The latest release from Speedo is designed to offer maximum compression. Available in Open and Closed Back Kneeskin, High Waist and Regular Jammer. Colors will be offered with limited availability.

Pure Valor

The Valor offers maximum flexibility for swimmers who prefer a lightweight suit that allows more movement. Available in Open and Closed Back Kneeskin, High Waist and Regular Jammer. Colors will be offered with limited availability.

LZR Racer PRO - the Exception to the Rule

All suits with woven fabrics are made with bonded seams- except the LZR PRO. However even with its sewn seams, the PRO Kneeskin and Jammer are illegal for 12U swimmers as woven fabric cannot extend past the hips. But 12U swimmers can take advantage of the woven fabric by choosing the 12U compliant Recordbreaker silhouette. Overall the lower cost of the PRO makes it a good first choice for a woven suit.

TYR

Venzo Genesis, Inferno, Phantom, Oblivion

Like Speedo’s Pure Intent, this group offers maximum compression. Colors and prints will be offered with limited availability. Most are available in Open and Closed Back Kneeskin, High Waist and Regular Jammer. Many swimmers need to go up a size in TYR tech suits.

Avictor 2

The Avictor is a suit with less compression and greater flexibility much like Speedo’s Pure Valor. Available in Supernova, USA and other prints as introduced. Available in Open and Closed Back Kneeskin, High Waist and Regular Jammer.

ARENA Powerskin series

Powerskin Carbon Core

Like Speedo’s Pure Intent and TYR’s Genesis, Arena’s Carbon Core offers maximum compression over flexibility. It differs in that it is a lighter weight fabric than the other compressive suits on the market. Available in Open and Closed Back Kneeskin and Jammer.

Powerskin Carbon Glide

The Carbon Glide stresses flexibility over compression much like Speedo’s Pure Valor and TYR’s Avictor. Available in Open and Closed Back Kneeskin and Jammer.

Powerskin Carbon AIR2

The Carbon Air is perhaps the lightest suit in the tech suit market and a big seller at Toad Hollow. Available in Open and Closed Back Kneeskin and Jammer.

Powerskin Carbon Flex and Ultra

The Carbon Flex and Ultra are the original Arena offerings in the high compression tech suit market. Available in Open and Closed Back Kneeskin and Jammer.

BLUESEVENTY

Nero Fit

The Fit offers bonded seams and a fabric with more stretch than other Level 2 suits and thus is easier to get on. The Fit is also one of the lowest priced woven/bonded suits on the tech suit market, making it a good choice for a swimmer’s first woven kneeskin. Available in Open Back Kneeskin and Jammer. A Toad Hollow Best Seller.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR SUIT

All technical suits need to dry out quickly. They must never be rolled up in a towel or left for any amount of time in a closed swim bag. Tech suits MUST be hung up immediately after use to air dry.

Swimmers wearing tech suits should only sit on a towel or soft surface. Avoid the edge of the pool and especially the rough surfaces of starting blocks.

Tech suits are not made to be worn all day. Their fabrics are sensitive to sweat and may break down with prolonged wearing without rinsing.

Only pull on the seams when putting on a tech suit. Suits cannot be returned due to holes in the fabric area. Leave plenty of time at the meet to put on your suit.

Guys - Cross the ties first before tightening and tying your suit. Suits cannot be returned due to ripping of the stitch “tunnels”.

We can help you with the fitting of tech suits, but we can only see the suit from the “outside”. Tech suits are not returnable if they take on water. It is up to the swimmer to tell if they feel the suit ultimately fits.

Tech suits are not returnable but may be exchanged within 30 days of purchase for another suit or store credit. They must be unworn and in the original package with all hang tags.

Any suits returned because of defects are subject to the inspection of the manufacturer and must be returned within 30 days of purchase. Rough handling and resulting damage from the situations listed above will most likely not be approved for exchange.

Please understand the guidelines for returns and exchanges are not set by Toad Hollow, but rather by the manufacturers. They recognize the need to care for these suits and do not accept defectives readily.

After all that.....it is the time to have fun and swim fast!

