

A couple of queries have been received concerning the wearing of tape so it may be helpful to re-distribute information sent out about a year ago.

SW 10.8 No swimmer shall be permitted to use or wear any device or swimsuit that may aid his/her speed, buoyancy or endurance during a competition (such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, etc.). Goggles may be worn. Any kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by FINA Sport Medicine Committee

The FINA rules are written for use at FINA Championships and competitions and reference to the FINA Sport Medicine Committee in the rule above is one such occasion. In Great Britain we follow the FINA Technical Rules for our competitions however it is not necessary to contact FINA in relation to the wearing of tape as in SW10.8. FINA are not interested in the local Saturday Night gala, League or Open Meet. It is unlikely there will even be a doctor appointed to such an event to be able to assist in any decision making so any decision with reference to the wearing of tape is the responsibility of the Referee of the event.

It is a matter for the Referee to decide if the wearing of such tape may contribute to the performance of the athlete. A piece of waterproof tape such as an adhesive dressing covering a small cut or wound will not make any difference to a swimmers performance. There is no reason to prevent a swimmer competing with it or to disqualify the swimmer after the race has been completed.

On the other hand large pieces of strapping may be applied to protect a swimmer from further Injury. In such an instance should the swimmer be competing? He or she may be at risk from further injury? It may be prudent for the Referee to exclude the swimmer from competition in their best interest! Occasionally an athlete may provide medical evidence in support of the need to wear some tape. In such instances the athlete must present this before the swim in the same way a Certificate of Disability or a Function Ability Card is submitted.

In all these scenarios it is the responsibility of the Referee to use common sense to ensure the competition is fair and in the best interest of all those competing. Do remember that the Referee does not always see everything and that it is the duty of every official to report whatever he or she observes so if you do see a swimmer with pieces of tape on any part of their body it should be reported. The Referee may well know all about it and have given permission but there is always the chance that he or she may not know and are waiting for your report!

Jane Davies