



Aquatics Attire

Appropriate aquatics attire is required for all competitors. As a coach, discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of wearing certain types of clothing during training and competitions. For example, long pants and shirts are not proper aquatics attire for any event. Explain that swimmers cannot perform their best while wearing long pants or shirts that restrict their movement.

Take athletes to high school or collegiate meets and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes that come improperly dressed to train and/or compete.

Clothing must be suited to the activities involved. Few sports require less equipment than swimming. Although equipment such as goggles and caps are recommended, a Special Olympics athlete only needs a swimsuit to participate.

Swimsuits

The swimsuit can be anything that closely resembles skin in fit and feel. For males, any brief swim suit made of smooth, quick-drying fabric, such as nylon or lycra, is fine. Gym shorts with waistbands that fit snugly around the waist can be substituted.

A one-piece suit is recommended for females. The suit needs to be close-fitting, and cut so as not to hinder movements. The swimsuit needs to be substantial enough to stay on the athlete's body while they train.

Racing suits, whether for men or women, will provide less drag and provide more efficiency in the water.

Cap

A tight-fitting, stretch swimmer's cap is recommended. Swim caps will prevent the hair from falling in the swimmer's face and thus provide less of a distraction. Besides keeping the swimmer's hair dry, the cap also reduces water drag and resistance.

Goggles

Swim goggles are encouraged. Goggles allow the swimmers to comfortably put their faces in the water, thus allowing for better body position and more efficiency. There must be careful adherence to safety with the use of this equipment. There are several varieties of goggles that allow for choices, depending on each swimmer's face.

Nose Clips

Nose clips are helpful for athletes who have difficulty controlling their breathing or who have sinus problems. Such clips should be used only when necessary.

Coaching Tips

- Always check with the lifeguard on duty.
- Take a head count of your swimmers and record their attendance. Give numbers to the lifeguard.
- Make lifeguard aware of any potential emergencies which may arise due to medical or behavioral conditions of swimmers.
- Designate a "spotter" for the group; this could be a parent/volunteer.
- Show swimmers the area in which they have been allocated.
- Set rules before any session commences. Ensure swimmers know their boundaries.
- If in an outdoor pool, check air and wind conditions as well as water temperature.
- Ensure that swimmers have been made aware of specific signals or cues to be used in an emergency.
- Show swimmers correct point of entry and type of entry required into the water.
- Prepare your session 15 minutes before start time. Have all necessary equipment placed in an appropriate and safe position on pool deck.



General Swimming Equipment List At-A-Glance

Chamois	Can be used in conjunction with a towel.
Fins	Used primarily in helping to develop and maintain good stroke technique, especially in drill work. Can be used in a fun activity within your training session.
Flags	Located five meters from end of pool. Used especially when swimming backstroke; indicates to swimmer in backstroke the distance from end of pool for turn or finish. Can be used during training sessions in pool.
Goggles	Encourage swimmers to wear goggles at all times while participating in training and competition. Goggles help beginners to put face in water and encourage confidence. Be aware that some swimmers may have prescription goggles, and swimmers should learn how to maintain and care for them.
Kickboards	Used during training sessions.
Nose Clips	Used by some swimmers who take in water through their nostrils, especially when performing turns.
Pace Clock	Used by swimmers to check their rest and go times during training. Can be used by coach when no stop watch is available. Swimmers need to be taught the use of a pace clock.
Pull Buoy	Can be used during a training session to help maintain buoyancy and in specific drills to develop upper body movement and strength.
Stop Watches	Used by the coach to check swimmers' times during time trials. They can also be used if no pace clock is available.
Swim Caps	Encourage swimmers to wear caps. However, they are not always necessary. Swimmers at competition level may be required to wear a cap; therefore, it is a good idea to have the swimmer adjust to wearing one. Also helps keep hair out of face and decreases drag.
Towels	Swimmers are encouraged to have a clean towel with them at training sessions.

General Coaching Points

There are differences of opinion on the use of floatation devices. Coaches must make their own decisions. However, if floatation devices are used, consider not using them for an equal amount of time as a means of developing a swimmer's own buoyancy and orientation in water. Eventually the swimmer may not require a floatation device.

Aids and equipment may need to be modified in order to adapt to physical differences. However, the individual should not become reliant on them.

Coaches need to be conversant with the rules of competition for the particular disability group of each swimmer in their care. For example, FINA (La Fédération Internationale de Natation) has particular rules for specific disability classifications that may meet the needs of a particular swimmer or swimmers at a multi-disability event. After classification, a card is provided that lists any exceptions for that swimmer. This must be produced prior to the commencement of any applicable event. Further details should be sought from your own national swimming body.