

Swim England North West

Open Water Regional Championships & 800m Challenge

British Swimming Guidance on Use of Wetsuits

The following guidance has been issued by the British Swimming Officials Group relative to the suitability of wetsuits in Open Water Competitions:

This rule change has been brought about to increase safety for competitors in water between 16-18 degrees (compulsory) and 18-20 degrees (optional). In accordance with other swimsuit rules, British Swimming will conform to the intention of the rule. We do not provide interpretation of FINA rules – only FINA as the governing body can interpret their own rules.

However, to provide guidance, the discussion to date has been around what would constitute coverage of the shoulder. An informed view is that to ensure complete coverage of the shoulder the wetsuit must include a sleeve, as a minimum polo of t-shirt length covering the full shoulder and upper arm in order to maintain shoulder cover during swimming. Full arm to wrist has been suggested although elbows do not feature in the rule, whereas coverage of knees as a mid-limb joint in respect of leg length of a wetsuit is.

It is expected that officials will apply common sense when dealing with references to neck, wrists and ankles. As in all Open Water events held in the home counties of England, Scotland and Wales, the Chief Referee will have responsibility for the overall management of the rules.