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To: General Chairs Board of Directors, USA Swimming  
Officials Chairs USA Swimming Officials  
Rules & Regulations Committee USA Swimming Coach Members

From: Jay Thomas, Chair, Rules & Regulations Committee

Re: USA Swimming Rule 701.4 – Swimwear – Wetsuits for Open Water Competition

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1. On January 11, 2017, FINA issued a Memorandum changing the FINA Bylaws which govern swimwear in Open Water competitions. This change permits the use of wetsuits when water temperature is between 20°C and 18°C, and requires the use of wetsuits when the water temperature is below 18°C.

2. Effective immediately, USA Swimming will modify USA Swimming rules as follows:

#### 701.1 EVENTS/MEETS

.1 (Unchanged)

.2 ~~Wets-Suit Events~~ — For open water swimming competitions in water with temperature below 20°C (68°F), men and women may use either swimsuits or wetsuits. When the water temperature is below 18°C (64.4°F), the use of wetsuits is compulsory. Meet directors may request permission from their LSCs to allow the use of wet suits in any non championship event. If approved, there shall be separate classification for wet suit swimmers which shall be clearly stated in the meet announcement and on the accompanying entry form. Swimmers using wet suits shall be scored separately from swimmers competing without wet suits.

.3 (Unchanged)

**701.3 MARKING** — Prior to the start, swimmers shall be marked with their race numbers on both upper arms and their upper backs. The swimmers shall be numbered vertically down the arms and horizontally across the upper backs. Swimmers shall be marked with their race numbers on both hands and/or their swim caps when competing in wetsuits. Depending on the finish system used, the Referee may also require numbering elsewhere on the body (hands or thighs). Paddlers and escort boats for escorted swims shall also be marked on both sides with the swimmer's race number so it is easily seen from either side.

#### 701.4 SWIMWEAR

.1 - .4 (Unchanged)

.5 Wetsuits are swimsuits made of material providing thermal insulation. Wetsuits for both men and women shall completely cover the torso, back, shoulders and knees and shall not extend beyond the neck, wrists or ankles. The thickness of material/s used shall be minimum 3mm and maximum 5mm. In addition, the outer surface of the wetsuit shall not include outstanding shapes, such as ridges, fins, etc.

Jay Thomas  
Chair, USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee