

# **New developments in performance swimwear, 2009 edition**

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## **Abstracts**

Developments in swimwear technology have revolutionised swimming and have created massive interest in what has traditionally been a low-tech sport.

Manufacturers of performance swimwear have been involved in a technological race to produce the world's fastest swimsuit. This race commonly referred to as "the bodysuit wars" culminated in early 2009 with the development of swimsuits constructed not from a textile but from 100% polyurethane.

The introduction of this new generation of performance swimwear coincided with a sharp improvement in swimming times which has fuelled a debate about whether high-tech suits provide their wearers with an unfair advantage. As a result of the controversy, polyurethane suits will be banned from competitive swimming with effect from January 1, 2010. From that date, competitive swimmers will be required to wear textile suits, and these must not extend further than the knee.

Following the ban on full length non-textile suits, performance swimwear manufacturers now have less leeway in their choice of design and materials. Consequently, they will face a major challenge in their quest to develop fast and innovative new swimsuits.

## Contents

### **SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Full length bodysuit

### **BIOMECHANICS OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMING**

Drag

Buoyancy

### **HISTORY OF SWIMWEAR**

### **FABRICS USED FOR SWIMWEAR AND FABRIC PROPERTIES**

Developments in swimwear fabrics

Key properties of swimwear fabrics

Types of swimwear fibres and fabrics

Elastane

Polybutylene terephthalate (PBT)

Nature-inspired fabrics

Polyurethane

Nano fabrics

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF PERFORMANCE SWIMWEAR**

Features designed to reduce drag

Designs of performance swimwear

Innovations in performance swimwear

### **PERFORMANCE SWIMWEAR REGULATIONS**

Controversy surrounding performance swimwear regulations

### **SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERFORMANCE SWIMWEAR MARKET**

### **KEY PERFORMANCE SWIMWEAR BRANDS**

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Adidas: Hydrofoil  
Arena: Powerskin  
Diana: Submarine  
Jaked: J01  
Speedo: LZR Racer  
Tyr: Tracer

## **OUTLOOK**

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Shark skin  
Figure 2: Hydrofoil  
Figure 3: Powerskin  
Figure 4: Submarine  
Figure 5: J01  
Figure 6: LZR Racer  
Figure 7: Tyr Tracer

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