

## Previously Published League Guidelines on Protective Gear

### ***Eyewear***

*The only item of protective gear that players are explicitly permitted to wear is prescription eyewear:*

*“A player will be permitted to wear prescription goggles of the type designed specifically for contact sports to withstand impact and to decrease the likelihood of injury to the eye, a protective plastic face mask prescribed by a physician that closely adheres to the upper face, a plastic protective nose guard and other similar protective devices designed to prevent injury prescribed by a physician”*

*Players or coaches must present the eyewear to the referees before the start of the game for inspection. To be acceptable, the eyewear must include “ASTM F803” stamped on its frame. A player in the pool with eyewear that has not been inspected and approved by the referees must be removed from the pool at the first opportunity. The player may return to the pool at a later time subject to the approval of the referees (removal of the eyewear; inspection and approval of the eyewear at a suitable dead-time opportunity, such as a time out or a period break).*

## More Recent Findings and Conclusions -- Informational Aid for Coaches, Players and Parents

It is clear is that some type of protective device (goggles or a mask-goggle device like basketball players sometimes use) is allowed. It is also a fact that whatever device is used it must do at least one thing: it cannot cause harm to the player wearing it or to opposing players that are exposed to it. This would rule out standard swim goggles in both scenarios. Another important factor to address is that it is a prerogative of the referee in each game to determine the devices safety. **NOTE:** Approval by one referee in a game does not automatically constitute approval in any other game. (This may open door to contention in the moment but it is the rule). Please review the FINA language below. We provide it as it gives us more direction and information than does the NCAA rule on the same matter.

### ***Protective Gear FINA Rule WP 5.4***

*Players shall wear non-transparent costumes or costumes with a separate undergarment and before taking part in a game shall remove any articles likely to cause injury.*

*What this means is that although we have established some guidelines as to what is acceptable, the referee still has total discretion as to what may be allowed during a game and should inspect all players prior to the start of any game for those articles. We all know that jewelry, (including body piercings), wrist bands, and the like must be removed before play, not only to prevent injury to the wearer, but to their teammates and opponents as well.*

*It gets a little trickier with some other "medical" equipment such as prescription eyewear, splints, braces and protective face masks.*

*The guidelines for such devices are relatively simple and are along the same lines as the most recent FINA interpretations.*

*Articles (i.e. facemasks and goggles) must be flexible with no hard or sharp edges that could cause injury to the wearer or others in the pool.*

*Finger splints must be padded and covered with no hard or sharp edges.*

*Player safety is first and foremost. If you intend, or are required, to wear a protective device it is recommended you get it checked out by the head referee in your zone prior to any competition to avoid not being allowed to wear that particular device in a game.*

*All the above being said, I do not want to waste players/parents time or money trying to guess what will be acceptable. Stu has offered up this language for consideration, relying on the definition of goggles: "the device needs to rest completely on the bones of the face, not in the eye socket of the skull." Another alternative is contacts.*

If there are any other questions please let the Board know. At games please consult with the referee and let them know that you will have a player in the water with a protective device on your player. The referee's decision is a final one.