

TO: Distribution

FROM: Charles Cockrell, Rules Committee Chair  
Donn Livoni, Long Distance Committee Chair  
Bob Bruce, Open Water Committee Chair

SUBJECT: Interpretation of USMS Rule 102.12.1E and Rule 303.7.3C

DATE: June 26, 2016

USMS rule 102.12.1E (governing pool events) says that "Any kind of tape worn on the body is not permitted unless approved by the referee". USMS rule 303.7.3C (governing long distance and open water event) also says that "Any kind of tape worn on the body is not permitted unless approved by the referee"

Therefore, to provide clearer guidance for officials, the following interpretation is issued jointly by the USMS Rules Committee and USMS Long Distance Committee.

The use of tape in competition is limited to situations involving verified medical conditions. The application of tape is intended to be for situations such as wound closure, taping of fingers or toes (no more than two), taping to secure medical devices, or other limited uses that would not provide any competitive advantage. The use of any kind of tape that purports to provide muscle compression; muscle, joint, or ligament stabilization; or other physical benefits, including therapeutic elastic tape or similar products, is never permitted in USMS competition.

The attached policy from USA-Swimming provides additional information for officials and conforms to our USMS interpretation of the rule.

Attachment

USA Swimming Interpretation regarding the use of therapeutic elastic tape.

Distribution

LMSC Chairs  
LMSC Sanctions Chairs  
LMSC Officials Chairs  
LMSC Open Water and Long Distance Chairs  
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Date: June 13, 2016

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 102.8.1.E– The use of Tape.

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The NCAA and NFHS have adopted rules which permit the use of tape under certain circumstances. There now appears to be some confusion regarding the application of USA Swimming Rule 102.8.1E. The following interpretation of 102.8.1.E is presented to provide clarity to the use of tape in USA Swimming competitions.

Article 102.8.1E states in part, ...**“Any kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the Referee.”**

Common sense should prevail. The following uses of tape are generally permitted in competition:

1. Wound protection and closure. Band-Aids, dressings, “Butterfly” type, etc. are normally permitted with no advanced notification to the Referee. When the tape to hold a dressing in place completely circles a major limb or the dressing is exceptionally large in size, advanced notification to the Referee is recommended.
2. Taping of fingers or toes. “Buddy Taping” no more than two (2) injured fingers or toes together should be permitted. Advanced notification to the Referee is recommended.
3. Tape to secure medical alert bracelets and pendants, religious objects, etc. should be permitted. Advanced notification to the Referee is recommended.
4. Tape to secure medical devices. Example – insulin pumps, ostomy bags, etc. should be permitted. Advanced notification to the Referee is required.

The following uses of tape are **not permitted** in competition – irrespective of whether a Doctor’s note has been presented.

1. Elastic Therapeutic Tape is never permitted.
2. Kinesio Taping is never permitted.
3. Any other taping intentioned to provide compression or support to muscles, ligaments, tendons or joints (except as stated above) is never permitted.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay Thomas".

Jay Thomas  
Chair, USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee