

Please pass the following along to all of your meet referees.

There have been several questions regarding the use of tape and other devices. Here are a few guidelines for referees to follow. As with many situations that we face, the answer is not always "black and white". We want referees to make common sense determinations based on their observations and information at hand.

Rule 102.14.2 says that **"Any kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the referee."** Note that this sentence is included with the rule deals with devices or substances that help speed, space, or buoyancy.

The prohibition against tape on the body generally stems from the compressive effects that tape could provide if wrapping an arm or leg, for example. This is much the same as the compressive effect provided by the coverage that some of the "high tech" suits provided. So, in general, something applied that would appear to provide this effect and help the swimmers speed would be prohibited.

The referee could approve the use of tape in limited circumstances, such as taping a bandage to cover a wound, taping a splint in place on a finger or toe, or prevention of further injury.

The USA-Swimming situations and resolutions database has one such example as follows:

46. Prior to the 100 butterfly, a coach informs the referee that his swimmer has a broken "pinky" finger and asks if the swimmer may swim with the last three fingers of the hand taped. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: If he determines that taping together of the fingers is to prevent further injury to the swimmer and not to "help his speed," the referee has the authority to allow the request.

Applicable Rules 102.10.10, 102.13.1 (Note these are USA-Swimming rule references.)

A question received about a **"Cho Pat" sports device** was addressed by the USMS Rules Chair as follows:

"Arm bands are not regarded as parts of the swimsuit and are not allowed. This is the same situation as: "Any kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the referee." As is the case with tape on the body, the referee at each meet will also make the determination about the Cho Pat.

It is important to point out that the determination on whether a device is acceptable for the "prevention of further injury" is not the same as determining a possible accommodation due to a disability, which is defined as a permanent, life-altering condition. The referee can modify the rules for a swimmer with a disability based on the guidelines in Article 108. This provision does not apply to injuries or other temporary conditions.

It is also important to note that while swimmers could present a doctor's note to explain the injury, it is not required. Referees are not required to follow such instructions, nor are they required to make evaluations based on detailed medical data that the swimmer might present. Referees are expected to make the best common-sense decisions that they can make based on the information available and must do so in a timely manner without disrupting the meet. This may include talking to the swimmer, asking questions regarding the injury or purpose, and taking into account any data the swimmer might provide.

The best advice is to instruct swimmers to approach referees before the meet and make the determination as early as possible.

Best Regards,

Charlie Cockrell
USMS Officials Chair