

Swimming Australia Limited Discussion Paper

Title:	Dive Entry for Competitive Swimming Policy
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This policy discussion paper has been prepared in relation to Dive Entries for Competitive Swimming. It has been prepared in response to concerns of inconsistencies in policy and information available to state associations, facility owners, operators and swimming clubs.

1. Background

Over the last fifteen years the recommended swimming pool depth considered suitable for dive entry have undergone a number of adjustments. During this time a distinction between the suitable depths for recreational users and for competition swimmers has also been introduced into the policy framework. FINA, as the peak international swimming body, have facility rules for competition venues which is a further documented form of guideline. The SAL policy position was adopted in 2006 to align with the Royal Life Saving Society - "Safe Water Entry For Competitions" (SU 1.22).

2. Current Guidelines

2.1. Royal life Saving Society Guidelines

The Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations (GSPO's) have two adopted standard that relate to dive entry. In the GSPO Design section is a guideline "Design of Starting Blocks" (FD 24). This was introduced in 2007 and includes the following:

- i. Starting blocks should not be located where water is less than 1.2m deep and in pools with depths between 1.2m and 2.0m should be removed or isolated for recreational swimming.
- ii. Where starting blocks are provided, there should be a minimum water depth of 1.2m for a distance of 5.0m from the pool wall.

The second GSPO Guideline is titled "Safe Water Entry For Competitions" (SU 1.22) which covers dive entry depths for competitive dive starts. The guideline is situated within the Supervision section of the GSPO's and was adopted in 2002 and an implementation guide produced in 2006. SU 1.22 restricts competitive dive starts to these pool conditions:

- i. Less than 0.9 metre water depth – **absolutely NO dive entry;**
- ii. 0.9 metre to less than 1.0 metre water depth – **concourse dive allowed;** providing concourse is not elevated more than 0.2 metre above the water surface;

- iii. 1.0 metre to less than 1.2 metre water depth – **concourse or platform dive**, providing concourse or platform is not elevated more than 0.4 metre above the water surface;
- iv. 1.2 metre or more water depth – **platform dive**, provided the platform is not elevated more than 0.75 metre above the water surface.
- v. Pool depth should extend for a distance of 5.0 metres from the endwall where the dive entry is made.

2.2. FINA Facility Rules

The FINA Facility Rules are intended to provide rules to define the best possible environment for competitive swimming use and training. The FINA Rules are not intended to govern facility issues related to the general public. The FINA Rules 2013-2017 include a rule for elite competition that recommends the following:

- i. A minimum depth of 1.35 metres, extending from 1.0 metre to at least 6.0 metres from the end wall is required for pools with starting blocks.

The FINA Facility Rules are often presented to new pool developers as a reference to guide the implementation of minimum standards for new pools. SAL Aquatic strategy team use these rules to present a case for certain outcomes that provide opportunities for the sport.

2.3. Swimming Australia Policy

As of June 2006 SAL formally adopted SAL Pool Depth Guidelines. These guidelines were adopted as the recommended guidelines for use by the national body, the state associations and clubs throughout Australia when engaging with facility owners and operators in relation to swimming competition and training. The guidelines are aligned with the RLSS Guidelines from SU 1.22 and relate to the conduct of dives for competition and training under the supervision of a coach or instructor. This was to ensure there was alignment with the guidelines of the body recognised for water safety in Australia. The guidelines were established with the input of ASCTA and are representative of the industry. These guidelines state:

- i. Less than 0.9 metre - No dives
- ii. 0.9 metre to less than 1.0 metre - Concourse dive (providing concourse is not more than 0.2 metre above the water surface)
- iii. 1.0metre to less than 1.2 metre – Concourse dive (providing concourse is not more than 0.4 metre above the water surface)
- iv. 1.2 metre to less than 1.35 metre - Platform (As long as the platform is not more than 0.75 metre above the water surface.)
- v. 1.35 metre and more - As per FINA Rule FR2.7

2.4. Swimming Australia Officials Guidelines

Within the SAL web site information is a section provided specifically for Clubs and Officials. This information includes a range of policies, procedures and rules. In this section the FINA

Facility Rules are listed as well as the FINA Swimming Rules. These rules are representative of international and national level competitions as approved by FINA.

3. Discussion

The issue for discussion is the difference in recommendation between the FINA Facility Rules and the SAL Guidelines and RLSS (SU1.22) on facility depths for diving. The FINA Rules present a position of greater risk mitigation than the RLSS Guidelines for Competition Swimming due to the greater depth recommendation of 1.35m minimum as opposed to a 1.20m minimum. However, the adoption of a 1.35m minimum depth would effectively eliminate competition and training diving activity across a large number of swimming facilities. This could present a negative scenario for the coaching of dive entries for swimmers entering the competition pathway.

Whilst it is important to note that the SAL Pool Depth Guidelines is in alignment with the RLSS Guidelines, the FINA Rules also provide an important tool for facilitating outcomes in relation to new pool development. The provision of pools with a 1.35m minimum depth provides a scenario with some flexibility in relation to future proofing new pools to enable dive starts.

4. Conclusion

The distinguishing feature of the SAL Pool Depth Guidelines (2006) and the RLSS "Safe Water Entry For Competitions" (SU 1.22) is that the policies are for swimming "competitors during competitions and training" under guidance from coach, instructor or official. Where the recommended pool depth being sought is in consideration of this purpose, then the SAL Pool Depth Guideline is the pertinent reference.

Where the recommended pool depth being sought is in consideration of a design for new pool development then the FINA Standard and the RLSS "Design of Starting Blocks" (FD 24) is the pertinent reference.

Where the recommended pool depth sought is in relation to entry into water for competition or training with novice swimmers then there should be no concourse diving into water with a depth less than 1.35 and no platform dives into water with a depth of less than 1.8 metres.

Where the recommended pool depth sought is in relation to recreational users then there should be no platform or concourse dives into water with a depth of less than 2.0 metres.