

Swimmers angry over afro Soul Cap Olympics ban

5th July, 2021



The Black Swimming Association is up in arms over a ban on the use of a swim cap at the upcoming Tokyo Olympics. FINA, the body that regulates international swimming, has rejected an application from the brand SOUL CAP. Its

product is a cap that accommodates diverse hairstyles and hair types. The company wants the cap certified for competition swimming. It wants to help swimmers with afros, braids, dreadlocks, hair extensions, weaves, and thick and curly hair. FINA said it would not permit the Soul Cap because swimmers have never used a cap "of such size and configuration" before. FINA stated it would not be permitted because "it didn't fit the natural form of the head".

The Black Swimming Association was aghast at the decision and called it a step backwards for black swimmers. It warned it would drive away swimmers from diverse backgrounds. BSA spokeswoman Danielle Obe said: "This will affect younger and up-and-coming swimmers who might want to consider taking up elite swimming." She added: "At the highest level, we're hearing that, 'we want the sport to be inclusive and representative; we want to have people of colour in the sport, but we want them to join on our terms'. This will affect their decision because by and large, hair is a significant barrier, especially for women." The caps are allowed at all Swim England clubs and competitions.

Sources: [skysports.com](https://www.skysports.com) / [insider.com](https://www.insider.com) / [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com)

Writing

Swimming is the best form of exercise. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

up in arms / Olympics / swimming / cap / competition / dreadlocks / swimmers / head / aghast / backwards / diverse / elite / sport / decision / hair / barrier / competition

True / False

- 1) A black swimming association has welcoming arms for a swim cap ban. T / F
- 2) The Soul Cap is for people with many kinds of hairstyles. T / F
- 3) A regulatory body said such a cap had never been used before. T / F
- 4) A regulatory body said the cap didn't fit the natural form of the head. T / F
- 5) The swimming association said the decision was a step backwards. T / F
- 6) The association said there would now be more elite swimmers. T / F
- 7) The association said hair is a major barrier for men. T / F
- 8) Soul Caps are not allowed at swimming competitions in England. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. up in arms | a. horrified |
| 2. upcoming | b. allow |
| 3. regulates | c. obstacle |
| 4. permit | d. approaching |
| 5. configuration | e. various |
| 6. aghast | f. angry |
| 7. diverse | g. conditions |
| 8. up-and-coming | h. design |
| 9. terms | i. supervises |
| 10. barrier | j. promising |

Discussion – Student A

- a) When was the last time you were up in arms?
- b) What do you think of the Olympics?
- c) What do you think of swimming caps?
- d) What do you think of FINA rejecting the Soul Cap?
- e) What do you think of our hairstyle?
- f) Why does it matter what swim cap people wear?
- g) Why won't FINA allow swim caps for people with more voluminous hair?
- h) What is the 'natural form of the head'?

Phrase Match

- up in
- rejected an application
- The company wants the cap
- a cap of such size
- it didn't fit the natural
- aghast
- a step backwards
- younger and up-and-
- we want them to join
- hair is a significant
- at the decision
- barrier
- form of the head
- from the brand
- for black swimmers
- arms over a ban
- on our terms
- and configuration
- coming swimmers
- certified for competition

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- When was the last time you were aghast at something?
- Should FINA reverse its decision?
- What might help those from diverse backgrounds to take up swimming?
- Why are swimming caps necessary?
- How unfair is it that hair can be a barrier in life?
- Has your hair ever caused you problems?
- What questions would you like to ask a FINA executive?

Spelling

- at the ugpocinm Tokyo Olympics
- the body that gteasrlu international swimming
- rejected an lipaiaotncp from the brand
- tmcsdooaame diverse hairstyles
- afros, braids, eoksdrcla
- of such size and gocnroaniftui
- ghaas at the decision
- pu-dan-moingc swimmers
- taking up eeilt swimming
- we want the sport to be eilsincvu
- hair is a ctignnasiif barrier
- clubs and espiomncitto

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. i	4. b	5. h
6. a	7. e	8. j	9. g	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Swimming

You think swimming is the best aquatic sport. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sports. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): sailing, diving or windsurfing.

Role B – Sailing

You think sailing is the best aquatic sport. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sports. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): swimming, diving or windsurfing.

Role C – Diving

You think diving is the best aquatic sport. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sports. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): sailing, swimming or windsurfing.

Role D – Windsurfing

You think windsurfing is the best aquatic sport. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sports. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): sailing, diving or swimming.

Speaking – Aquatic Sports

Rank these with your partner. Put the best aquatic sports at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Synchronised swimming
- Diving
- Rowing
- Windsurfing
- Swimming
- Sailing
- Water Polo
- Canoeing

Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 T	4 T	5 T	6 F	7 F	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.