

Summersport's Akal enjoys competitive aspect of swimming

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
June 19 2017 5:56 AM



EDWARDSVILLE – Summersport swimmer Cole Akal has been a two-sport standout during his past summers, swimming for the Sharks and also playing for Alton's Junior American Legion baseball team; this summer, however, Akal chose to concentrate on swimming over baseball.

“I'm just focusing on swimming and working and enjoying my summer off right now,” Akal said during Thursday's Southwestern Illinois Swimming Association season opener at WaterWorks in Edwardsville. “Going into this summer, I was conflicted over whether to play or not; I decided take a summer off and just focus on swimming.”

Akal has been a swimmer since he was eight years of age. “This is probably my 10th or 11th year here (with the Sharks); I really enjoy it, it's a great way to stay in shape and I enjoy competing against everyone else. I've made some great friends over the years through swimming because there's something about swimming together in the water for those long hours, practices together.

“The friendships are definitely a big one, but I also love going out and competing against other people; it's a really remarkable sport because it's different from baseball where it's more of a team sport; swimming does have a team aspect, but at the end of the day, it's you against the other person – it's straight-up competition.”

Akal is hoping to swim after his graduation from Alton High School next year. “I think I'm going to swim in college,” Akal said. “It's a great way to get into a school and it's also a great way to stay in shape and keep my days of swimming going.”

Akal is hoping to major in aerospace engineering in college. “I'd love to design spaceships and airplanes and stuff like that,” Akal said.