

Summersport aims for 25th straight SWISA title Sunday, Water Works looks to challenge

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GRANITE CITY - Back in the summer of 1992, Paddler's Pirates of Granite City claimed the Southwestern Illinois Swimming Association championship.

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Since then, it's been the Sharks who have sat atop the league.

The Sharks will be aiming for their 25th straight SWISA title when the league championship meet is held at Paddlers beginning at 9 a.m. Sunday.

“It's been a staggering number of years that we've won the championship,” said Shark coach Nancy Miller. “We've had a large number of swimmers who have committed to the program from the time they enter through the time they get to high school, but at the core of what we've been able to do is because of the number of parents, volunteers and swimmers and their siblings who have helped the program over the years.

“You can't do it all by yourself; I'm really, really proud of the kids we've had, not only as swimmers, but as human beings. They've matured and taken the lessons they've learned not only in swimming, but in life.”

Miller is looking forward to the challenge Sunday. “The whole season is a work in progress,” Miller said. “We've had kids who have gotten better and improved their times all season; they've worked hard all year to get better, faster and stronger. I just hope we can perform as well as we can.”

“I think it'll be a close meet,” said WaterWorks coach Elizabeth McPherson. “It may come down to the relays; there'll be a lot of points in those relays and it may come down to that.

“We've had a really good season; our girls and older swimmers have been very strong for us; we've done well all season long. We're going to go in there and do the best that we can.”

Like others involved in the league, Sunset Hills' coach Dan O'Keefe is looking forward to Sunday's championship meet. “We're looking forward to the meet,” O'Keefe said. “We have some kids who are really excited to swim in the meet and I think we're going to be competitive.

“Summer club swimming is a pretty short season; we think we can compete well.”

Weather conditions, surprisingly, could play a role Sunday; the forecast is calling for a high of 93 after a Saturday high of 102.

“Because of the temperatures, the water is likely to be warm Sunday and you have to take things like that into consideration. We'll deal with the conditions as best as we can,” O'Keefe said. “All we can do is go there and do the best that we can, but it'll be a fun meet. We'll be ready for it.”



