



# **Macie Sparks Is Top Swimmer for Paddlers Swim Club, Provides Leadership and Sets Example for Younger Swimmers**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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GRANITE CITY – Macie Sparks is one of the top swimmers for Paddlers Swim Club of Granite City, and performed well in their Southwestern Illinois Swimming Association dual meet against Montclair Swim Club of Edwardsville and the SWISA Championships.

Sparks took a pair of seconds for the Pirates, and also was on a pair of relay teams that finished in second as Paddlers fell to the Marlins 439-253 in a recent meet. During the meet, Sparks felt that the Pirates had swam very well.

“I feel like everything’s going well so far,” Sparks said in an interview during the meet. “Relays have gone really well, and everyone’s swimming really hard tonight.”

Sparks is one of the older swimmers on the team and helps to provide leadership for the Pirates, especially for the younger members on the team.

“I really try and help out the younger kids a lot,” Sparks said. “I help coach them at practice, and really try and encourage them and help with their strokes, because I know what an influence the older kids had on me when I was younger. So I try to do that for them.”

Sparks’ specialty races are the 100-meter breaststroke and 100-meter individual medley and swam in the high school season for Metro-East Lutheran. She feels that the high school swimming season is more relaxed, while the summer season is a bit more competitive.

“Winter for me is way more relaxed, and it’s just a lot of fun,” Sparks said. “The people and the coaches. There’s just a whole different atmosphere being outside. I swam with all these kids since I was five in the summer, so coming back every summer, it’s a whole lot of fun, and it’s really relaxing. We just have a good time.

“It’s just like a different competition, different feel,” Sparks also said about the summer season.