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LAKEWOOD RANCH HIGH I SWIMMING

Allison stays on schedule

BY ALAN DELL CORRESPONDENT

EAST MANATEE -- There are so many things to like about Corey Allison, but nothing stands out more than her work ethic.

In three years of swim practice for the Sarasota Sharks, Allison has never missed a morning practice. Making it to those 5 a.m. practices at the Sarasota YMCA South Branch from her Lakewood Ranch home is no small feat.

She's up at 4:15 a.m. and in the pool from 5 to 6:30 a.m. She then makes a quick change before heading to her first class at Lakewood Ranch High. When the school day ends, she is back on her way to Sarasota and back in the pool at 3:15 for another three hours.

It adds up to nine practices a week, which include Saturday morning workouts from 7:30 to 10:30. Even on meet days, the 17-year-old is usually in the pool for workouts.

Steve Brown, a coach for the Sharks, has seen a lot of hard workers. Allison ranks right up there at the top.

"Most of her success can be attributed to her hard work," Brown said. "When she came to us in the ninth grade after moving here from Ohio, she wasn't used to what we do. There was an adaptation period, but she made the adjustment."

Allison takes her dedication in stride. The best part is that she enjoys it, though she said there are mornings when the idea of getting more sleep is enticing.

"The No. 1 thing that drives me is that I love the sport," Allison said. "Plus, I am so close to everyone on the team. It's fun and it's easy to see yourself improve."

Allison trains six days a week for 50 weeks. The only time she takes off is a two-week span after her club season ends about a week before school starts.

Right now, the 5-foot-5, 130-pounder is concentrating on the high school season and this Saturday's district meet.

Her goal is to qualify for the state meet. She said her best chances are in the 200-yard individual medley and the 500 freestyle.

She just missed qualifying in both those events last season. She also will be swimming on two of Lakewood Ranch High's relay teams.

Allison took first place in the 500-yard freestyle and the 100-butterfly in this season's Manatee County championships. In the Tri-County Meet, which includes many of her Sharks teammates from Sarasota County, she was sixth in the 200 IM and the 500 freestyle. Her best times are 2 minutes, 13.5 seconds in the 200 IM and 5:11.3 in the 500 free.

"To qualify for states, I think I need to be under 2:10 in the 200 IM and under 5:13 in the 500 free," Allison said. "After putting in all those hours the past year, I believe I can do it."

Allison's life is not one-dimensional. She is a member of her student government and never misses a Friday night football game. She maintains a 3.5 GPA, and one of her favorite classes is psychology.

She did miss an afternoon practice recently because she had a commitment as a student government member to go to a meeting for homecoming. Of course, she made the practice up.

"I never missed a morning practice, but one time my alarm didn't go off, and I was about 30 minutes late," Allison said. "Some people say I don't have time to for other things because of swimming, but I find myself being successful in the other parts of my life because I am on a schedule and manage my time. It helps me to be more organized."

She wants to swim in college and Brown sees her as a Division I prospect.

"She is absolutely a Division I swimmer. She can definitely swim at that level in college," Brown said.
