

# Friday night lights: Redbirds, Shells refreshed, ready to go at Rock Island, Carlinville

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**ALTON/ROXANA** – The **Alton High School Redbirds** and the **Roxana High School Shells** are ready to kick off the football season on a high note in their separate matches against two formidable opponents Friday night.

With a **1-8** record for the 2015 season and his inaugural year as Alton's head coach, **Eric Dickerson** is relying on some of his young team members returning to the squad as juniors can bring his some of the boys from the school's undefeated freshmen team up to speed in varsity.



“We do have some experience coming back,” Dickerson said. “Those sophomores and juniors that played last year, we’re really relying on them to use experience that they had last year to kind of bring those young ones along and go from there.”

The Redbirds struggled throughout their nine weeks of play last fall, winning one game of the season in a matchup against the **Granite City High School Warriors** with a score of **42-14** on Oct. 9, 2015.

Taking an almost four-hour long road trip to **Rock Island**, the Redbirds will face off against the Rocks in their season kickoff Friday night. In last year's matchup, the **Rocks** rolled past the Birds **34-6** at **Public School Stadium**. The opportunity to take the win to start the season on a positive note could be the push that the team needs to keep morale high and build the team's confidence early on.





Under the leadership of **Pat Keith**, the Roxana Shells maintained a solid and positive record of **7-3**. Keith has a coaching career total of **29-37**.

Now in his eighth season as head coach, Keith is ready to get out on the gridiron and face off against **Carlinville High School**. The **South Central Conference** competitors battled in the season opener last year, Roxana falling **48-24**, and in the playoff rematch on Oct. 30, 2015. The Shells were again defeated with a score of **52-12**. Their third and last loss of the season came from Pana, who they will battle again on **Sept. 2**.

This rematch and the first win of the season could mean a lot to the Shells as a whole, but all and all, the team is just ready to get out on the field and show the Cavaliers what they have been working so hard on in the off-season.

"I'm happy with the guys this year," Keith said. "They're putting in a good effort and have a good attitude, so we'll go from there."