

# AHS introduces fall teams at Fall Sports Kickoff

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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## **RIVERBENDER.COM VIDEO BELOW:**

ALTON – Alton High School's fall sports teams were introduced to the students and fans Friday night at AHS' Fall Sports Kickoff event at West Elementary School and Public School Stadium.

The boys soccer, girls volleyball and football teams all held inter-squad scrimmages on the evening and were introduced to the fans, as well as the boys and girls golf, boys and girls cross-country and girls tennis teams during the event, as well as the cheerleading and dance teams; the Marching 100 also performed part of their halftime show to the fans.

The girls' tennis team was introduced following their 7-2 Friday win at Bradley-Bourbonnais; the boys and girls golf teams have already commenced their seasons with tournaments in the past week.

“We’re ready to go,” said Redbird football coach Eric Dickerson following their scrimmage. “We’re at the point where we’ve beat up on each other long enough and we’re ready to see another colored jersey out there, so we’ll get ready for next week” when the Redbirds open their season against Highland.

The AHS girls volleyballers open their season at Columbia at 5:30 p.m. Monday, with their home opener at the Redbird Nest coming at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday against Metro East Lutheran. “We kept (the varsity and JV teams) pretty separate (in their scrimmage at the West gym); we play Monday night so we wanted to work on some things as a team,” said Redbird coach Stacey Ferguson. “There are several things we need to work on and it’s hard in a scrimmage-type setting for the real competitiveness to come out, but I saw some really good things and some things we need to tighten up a little bit to compete a little bit stronger on Monday.

“Even from our freshmen up, we have great numbers and we have a lot of talent; even watching the freshmen scrimmage one another, there were a lot of good things I saw there. We had good numbers all summer and good numbers for tryouts – they’ve been in there working hard and we have a lot of younger girls, so I’m really expecting to see some vast improvement throughout the season.”

“We’re looking really good,” said boys soccer coach Nick Funk. “We did a lot of work this summer, went 3-4 times a week all through July, played in a showcase tournament over in St. Louis; we’ve got a lot of experience coming into the season and a lot of kids this year – their foot skill, as an average, is a little bit higher than we’ve had in the past, and I think that’s really going to help us this year.

“We want to play a little bit different style than we really have; in years past, we were a little outrun you, outgun your team; we’ve kind of shifted with the players we have.”

Alton opens their season next weekend with their annual round-robin tournament at Piasa Motor Fuels Field against Gateway Legacy Christian of St. Louis Friday evening, Dunlap Saturday morning and Edwardsville Saturday evening; their Southwestern Conference opener comes at home Sept. 4 against Belleville East.

“We’ve actually upped our ante a little bit” as far as the schedule goes, Funk said. “We’ve taken off a few of the smaller schools we’ve played in the past, like (Springfield) Sacred Heart-Griffin and Jerseyville (Jersey), teams like that – nothing against them, we’re looking to play teams a little more our size population-wise.

“We’ve added a few – we’ve got Gateway Christian in our tournament this year and added DeSmet this year (one of the St. Louis area’s traditional soccer powers) – that’s a big addition, that’ll be fun. These kids haven’t played a team like that before; this will be the first time we’ve played them.”

The DeSmet match will be at the DeSmet grounds in Creve Couer, Mo., at noon Sept. 22, right before the Redbirds enter the annual St. Louis CYC Tournament at Lou Fusz Soccer Park in Fenton, Mo. “I’m excited,” Funk said. “I think we’re going to be a force to be reckoned with.”

For more information on schedules – including underclass schedules and updates – visit [www.altonathletics.org](http://www.altonathletics.org).

