

Dickerson named new Alton High School head football coach

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Eric Dickerson, a man well known in Alton High School football circles, has been named the new head coach of the Redbirds.

Dickerson has been an Alton High assistant football coach for five years. He replaces Jeff Alderman, who will remain as athletic director. He is a fourth-grade teacher at

Lewis and Clark Elementary School. The new head football coach was the defensive coordinator under Alderman.

Dickerson was announced as Alderman's successor at Tuesday night's Alton School Board meeting.

Alderman said he is excited about bringing Dickerson aboard as the head football coach.

"We interviewed five candidates out of the 37 who applied, but it was very clear that Eric was our obvious choice," he said. "I think his biggest asset is knowledge of the game, especially the defensive side and being willing to study and prepare. He has been here at Alton High School and he has earned the players' respect. As soon as the kids find out, they will be excited."

The new Redbirds coach said it was difficult to come up with the exact words to describe how excited he is to be leading the Alton football program.

"It's definitely not going to be easy, but from what Coach Alderman has done the last three years, the foundation for this program is there," Dickerson said. "It is my job to keep building on it and going in the right direction," Dickerson said.

Alderman said he believes the Alton program should try to retain continuity with Dickerson's hire.

"Things are headed in the right direction," he said. "There is no doubt in my mind Eric can keep it headed in a positive direction. I am going to by no means look over his shoulder, but any time he wants help he will have it. It will be Eric's program."

Alton will lose 22 seniors from last year's 5-4 team. Dickerson said the remaining players and incoming freshmen will have to step up and accept bigger roles this season.

One of Dickerson's focuses will be on the transition of middle school players to the high school. He is also the boys track coach and he said he will encourage players to participate in that sport because he said the conditioning involved in both goes hand in hand.

"The players making the transition from middle school to high school is huge for us," he said. "When your kids come in and have expectations already it makes it much easier."

Dickerson was a defensive end at Marquette and McKendree College. The new head coach is a firm believer in the importance of the defensive unit.

"Coach Alderman was gracious enough to let me run the defense," Dickerson said.
"There is an old adage that defense wins championships and I think that is true in high school, college and the NFL."