

# McAfoos, Gilchrese, To Be Keys To Redbirds Football Success, Are Auto Butler Male Athletes of Month For Alton

by Randy Manning  
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ALTON - Alton Redbirds quarterback Graham McAfoos and running back Keith Gilchrese have emerged as strong leaders for the team over the summer of 2022.

Graham and Keith will be keys to this year's Alton fall football success. The pair both believe Redbird football will be different in 2022 than the 2021 season. Graham and Keith are Auto Butler Alton High School Male Athletes of the Month.

"In the past, Alton Redbird football has been very special to the community," Graham said. "We have a new coaching staff (led by Coach David Parker) that are bringing a different effort and ways to put in the effort. I think they are making some changes and I think we will be a different team this fall."

"I think there is a different energy that appeals to the guys a lot of the guys who are a little younger and gives them inspiration," the quarterback said.

Graham said the key to success is the team showing up every day and taking advantage of the skills they have and taking that to other teams.

Graham knows the Southwestern Conference will be tough again, but he believes the Redbirds will stand up to opponents with their speed and ability.

"Our conference has always been tough and we have to worry about ourselves and when we go up against them they will see we are a different team," he said.

The Redbird quarterback said Alton has solid defensive talent and speed and athleticism throughout the team. Cody Markle and Jesse Simmons are the offensive coordinators for the Redbirds and have found some schemes that Graham believes will beat other teams.

Keith said he has been inspired by coach Parker and the rest of the coaching staff.

"He has brought this drive to us that we need," he said. "We hope that drives us to a great season. We start on August 26.

"This won't look like the same Alton of last year," the talented running back said. Our attitude and the way the offense drives the ball will be totally different. Come ready with your popcorn."