



# Redbirds Football Team Has Excellent Summer Workout Schedule With Coach Parker, Ready For 2022 Season

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON - Preparations for the upcoming football season will move into high gear at Alton High School as Monday is the official opening day of IHSA football practice. New head coach David Parker has been very pleased with how things have been going so far in summer workouts and he has created a large sense of excitement in the new Redbird football squad.

"So far, it's been beautiful and excellent," Parker said during a recent phone interview. "We've had good numbers showing up for the weightlifting and conditioning drills right now, and we've an opportunity to play seven-on-seven games against other schools. I'll tell you what, we started out kind of iffy, as we were getting and learning a new system. We have improved and gotten better."

The Redbirds played seven-on-seven passing games in June against schools such as Granite City, Roxana, Decatur MacArthur, Marquette Catholic and McCluer North of Florissant, Mo., and the Redbirds have steadily improved as the summer's gone along.

Offensively, senior quarterback Graham McAfoos has played very well and has a very dependable receiving corps, which includes senior William Harris, sophomore Travis Billups and junior Johnny Everage.

"The whole receiving corps has improved," Parker said.

Defensively, the Redbirds have had their ups and downs, mainly due to players going on family vacations at various times throughout the summer. The three standouts thus far have been senior Gardell Ballinger III, junior Antoine Phillips and Christian Hardin.

The most important thing for Parker in his first year is that he's been able to establish positive relationships with his players, and the vast majority of the players are starting to buy into the new program, which will pay off in the end.

"Every day, I'm getting more and more comfortable with the guys," Parker said. "We're starting to build meaningful relationships. I'd say the majority of guys are starting to buy into the program."

Coach Parker also credited his coaching staff for helping the players along as the team gets ready to start the new season.

"I'm very pleased with my coaching staff as well," Parker said. "They've done a good job of teaching the basic skills and fundamentals of football and it's awesome having those guys around. We've been together for four months, and it seems like four years."

Parker also gave a shoutout to the players' parents and guardians for their support.

"The parents and guardians have been very supportive as well," Parker said, "and I hope it continues throughout the season."

The regular football season starts on Aug. 26 at Public School Stadium against Cahokia, which also will be the Redbirds' Senior Night. The Redbirds will travel to Collinsville Sept. 9, and the Southwestern Conference schedule will have Alton hosting Edwardsville on September 30 and playing on the road at East St. Louis Oct. 7 and O'Fallon Oct. 14 before finishing the regular season Oct. 21 at home against Belleville Althoff Catholic.

Parker and the Redbird coaching staff are currently working on the basics and the prep work for Cahokia starts.

"Right now, I'm going into that game 50-50," Parker said. "We haven't yet started breaking down film, but we'll start focusing on Cahokia on Aug. 8."

