

Heat Wave Plays Havoc With Week One Football Schedule, Several Changes Announced

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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The schedule for week one of the 2023 Riverbender.com high school football season has been reshuffled because of the current heat wave that has invaded the St. Louis area,

with one game - Jackson, Mo. at Edwardsville - pushed back an hour to an 8 p.m. kickoff, while two other games - Collinsville at Belleville East and Alton at Cahokia - moved to Saturday morning at 10 a.m.

The season openers set for Friday has Carlinville visiting Litchfield, Greenville playing at Staunton, Civic Memorial at Marquette Catholic, Granite City at O'Fallon, Piasa Southwestern at Gillespie, Jersey at Roxana, Carrollton at Beardstown, Jacksonville Routt Catholic at Hardin Calhoun and Camp Point Central at White Hall North Greene still scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. Games that have been moved back to 8 p.m. are Jackson at Edwardsville, Mattoon at Triad and Breese Central at Highland. On Saturday, both Alton at Cahokia and Collinsville at Belleville East have been moved to 10 a.m., with East Alton-Wood River at St. Louis Gateway STEM still set for 10 a.m. and East St. Louis plays Chicago Mt. Carmel Catholic at Hancock Stadium at Illinois State University at 7 p.m.

Jackson and Edwardsville will play in a rematch of last year's season opener at Jackson, where the Tigers rallied from a halftime deficit to defeat the Indians 41-34 in double overtime, ending a long-standing home winning streak for Jackson. The game also marks the debut of new Edwardsville head coach Kelsey Pickering, who was appointed head coach after long-time coach Matt Martin stepped down after 13 seasons at the helm.

The Tigers return senior quarterback Jake Curry, who threw for 1,811 yards and 24 touchdowns while running for 347 yards and scored seven touchdowns. Curry will have an outstanding receiving corps to throw to, including senior Kellen Brnfre, who caught 40 balls for 461 yards and four touchdowns, and Joey DeMare, who had 10 receptions for 191 yards and five touchdowns.

Dalton Brown keys a solid defense for Edwardsville, with 94 tackles, 46 solo, and two interceptions last season. Iose Epenesa also returns, with 58 tackles, 31 solo, and a fumble recovery.

Alton, who went 1-8 in 2022, will be coached by interim head coach Cody Markle, who took over after the sudden resignation of former head coach David Parker, who stepped down to take an administrative position at the Normandy School District in north St. Louis County.

The Redbirds will have back Travis Billups on the offense, with Billups catching 13 passes for 119 yards last season and will have great potential in the backfield in Johnny Everage and Antoine Phillips returning.. Everage will also return on the defensive side, with 25 tackles - 20 solo - while Phillips had a good season on defense last year, contributing 77 tackles - 52 solo - along with a sack, four fumble recoveries and two interceptions.

