

# Redbirds prepared to battle Rocks in Friday's opener

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**ALTON --** For the **Alton Redbirds** football team, this 2015-16 season is one of new beginnings.

Heading into this **Friday, Aug. 28's** game at **Public School Stadium**, the home of the Alton Redbirds, new head football coach **Eric Dickerson** and his team are ready to compete against the **Rock Island High School Rocks**.

Leading the Rocks in his fourth year of coaching, **Bryan Stortz** had a couple successful years before last season; going 8-3 in 2012 and 8-2 in 2013. However, the Rocks lost their edge during the 2014 season when their record fell to 3-6.

The two schools's varsity teams are similar in height, weight and past records. However, Dickerson noted that his only slight concern is that of their returning players.

"They have a total of 14 returning players, offensively and defensively," Dickerson said, "it makes for a more experienced team."

At Alton, the roles of the 22 seniors that graduated last year have been filled by the new senior and junior class. Some sophomores that have shown the coaches what they are made of have even made the varsity team.

The Redbirds, under the leadership of former head coach **Jeff Alderman**, went 2-7 in 2012, 4-5 in 2013, and 5-4 in 2015, respectively.

"You can't fill the shoes that were left by Coach Alderman," Dickerson said, "all I can do is take the foundations that he built and continue on with his winning ways."

Although this is his first head coaching job, Dickerson has over eighteen years of coaching experience, five of those years having been spent as an assistant coach for the Redbirds.

"The transition has been seamless," Dickerson said, "I know all of these guys, and I've seen them grow through out the years."

"The kids have worked extremely hard, and we are certainly ready to come out and play tough tomorrow night," Dickerson said.

The game, which will begin at **7 p.m.**, will be [live broadcasted on Riverbender.com](http://Riverbender.com).