

A formidable foot could take Malvern kicker a long way

Syracuse has offered a scholarship to Brendan Carney already. He also is a dangerous punter.

By Rick O'Brien
INQUIRER SUBURBAN STAFF

Sitting in the bleachers at the Carrier Dome on Saturday afternoon, Brendan Carney pictured himself dressed in a Syracuse uniform.

For Carney, who watched as the Orangemen beat Temple in a Big East Conference football game, that picture alone was worth the countless hours of practice and training.

Carney, a standout placekicker and punter for Malvern Prep, was offered a scholarship by Syracuse earlier this month.

"I'm really excited about it," said Carney, a senior.

"All my hard work has paid off. It's a great feeling when someone has enough faith in you to offer a full scholarship."

In what was an unofficial visit, Carney toured the Syracuse campus, met with head coach Paul Pasqualoni, and visited the winning locker room after the Orangemen defeated the Owls, 45-3.

Carney said he is flattered by the Syracuse offer, but is weighing his options.

Though they have not yet offered scholarships, Penn State and Miami are other possibilities.

Gamp Pellegrini, Malvern Prep's longtime coach, believes Carney's potential as a placekicker or punter in college is unlimited.

"He works all the time on his kicking," Pellegrini said. "He keeps getting better and better."

"He has a strong leg, is very accurate, and he puts kickoffs wherever you want. He's also a very consistent punter."

Carney, who lives in Valley Forge, played soccer until seventh grade. He then decided to play football on a full-time basis.

Jeff Dinnocenti, Malvern Prep's special teams coach,

started working regularly with Carney in the summer before his sophomore year.

"Brendan was a little bit raw, but you could see he had all kinds of potential," Dinnocenti said.

The 6-foot-5, 190-pound Carney has totaled 113 points — a school record for a kicker — in his high school career.

This season, Carney has boot-ed 21 extra points and one field goal, a 27-yarder against Penn Charter.

Since the Friars have consistently posted touchdowns when they get anywhere near the end zone, his three-point opportunities have been limited.

"Our offense has been doing really well this year," Carney said. "I'm content with the number of chances I've got."

"As long as the team is winning, that's the most important thing."

Malvern Prep, the No. 2 team in The Inquirer's suburban rankings, is 6-0 overall and 2-0 in the Inter-Academic League.

The squad has averaged 28.3 points per game and has outscored its opponents, 170-35. The last two wins have come in shutout fashion.

If Carney doesn't boot the ball into the end zone on kickoffs, it usually falls inside the 5. His punts, which have averaged about 41 yards this season, are just as effective.

"I enjoy helping the defense out, punning the other team as deep as I can," Carney said. "I know it's giving our team a boost."

Said Pellegrini: "It's a great thing for a coach not to have to worry about the kicking game. The kid does a wonderful job."

Dinnocenti, a volunteer assistant on Pellegrini's staff for the last seven years, played soccer at Spring-Ford High (Class of 1985).



BARBARA JOHNSON / Suburban Staff
Brendan Carney's 113 points are a Malvern Prep record. His top punt this season went 53 yards.

He says Carney's best kicking days are ahead of him.

"He'll be able to hone his skills in college and get a lot stronger," said Dinnocenti, an Exton resident.

Carney attended a National Kicking Service camp at Monmouth University in July.

He won awards for the longest punt (57 yards) and best hang time on a punt (5.3 seconds).

The highlight of Carney's career at Malvern Prep took place last season.

His 30-yard field goal with 32.8 seconds remaining in the game gave the Friars a 20-19 win over Penn Charter and clinched the Inter-Act title.

"I felt a little pressure, because the kick was for the league championship," Carney said.

"I hit the sweet spot, pretty much hit the ball dead center. I knew it was going to be good as soon as I hit it."

Carney's mother, Kathleen, has captured most of her son's kickoffs, punts and field goals on videotape. She put together a five-minute tape of Brendan's best kicks for college recruiters to watch.

Carney's longest punt this year was for 53 yards in a season-opening win over St. Joseph's Prep.

He said he hit a 58-yard field goal in practice earlier this season.

"If he has the wind behind him, forget it," Pellegrini said. "He'll hit it a long, long way."

Rick O'Brien's e-mail address is robrien@phillynews.com.

2001 Brendan Carney article

Clipped By:



Rcarey5171
Wed, Dec 30, 2020