



Combine Series' Krautman wins Rutgers kicking competition

Camp operated by CS Associate Lee McDonald

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If Greg Schiano's goal was to audition a group of kickers under game-like conditions, he couldn't have scripted it better. With the temperature on the turf hitting the "oppressive" level, and with crowd noise filtering through the sound system, two of the region's top kickers squared off.

Up for grabs was the title of MVP of the second annual Rutgers Specialist Camp, and the finalists were Ramapo High School's [Ross Krautman](#) and William Tennent (PA) High School's Sean Baner. Two misses would equal elimination. Each kicker was perfect through 50 yards. At 52 yards, Baner finally missed his first kick of the day. Krautman hit from the distance, prompting a move to 54. Both players easily made the distance, and they did it again from 56. Heading to the 57 yard mark, Baner had to hit or Krautman would automatically win. But it wasn't meant to be, as the kick narrowly missed and Krautman emerged victorious.

"They showed everyone that they are legit D1A scholarship kids," said former Rutgers kicker, Lee McDonald, whose [Special Teams Solutions](#) company ran the event.

McDonald had nothing but superlatives for Krautman.

"Krautman, he is a big time kicker," said McDonald. "Very consistent. Fierce competitor. Great lift on his ball. Extremely accurate. And he is solid with kick-offs."

All wasn't lost for Baner, as he won the punt competition with a best punt of 59 yards (4.8 hang time).

"Baner is your jack of all trades," said McDonald. "Kicks off well. Field goals are solid and he punts extremely well. He is what you call a legitimate combo prospect – all three skills extremely well. A very strong leg."

Krautman has traveled across the country in recent years, participating – and earning honors – in many of the top competitions. After winning MVP honors at the Rutgers event, Krautman had nothing but great things to say about the camp, as well as his showing.

"The camp was awesome," said Krautman. "All the Rutgers coaches were there - the head coach, special teams coach. They brought a lot of kickers in. I thought I did very well. I am always confident when I go to a camp, always focused. I always know that I will do good. From the start, I thought it was my day. I really like Rutgers, it is in my top three, and I knew it was a day that I could do well in front of the coaches."

The crowd noise that was pumped into the stadium added a unique element to the competition. Krautman said that it was the first time that he had to kick under such conditions.

"There was crowd noise, trying to get into the kickers' heads. We were kicking with the snapper and holder from the 50 on. Then, with the crowd noise, I didn't worry about that. I was so focused on my kicking, but it was cool though. They never did that at any other camp. It definitely pumped me up."

The kicking camp was the second event held at Rutgers this spring, with the Big Man Academy kicking things off last week. The action continued today with the annual Schiano Shootout 7-on-7 competition, which was won by St. Peter's Prep. The team's regular camp will begin tomorrow. Stay tuned for more coverage.

