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Shane Conlan Finds It Fun To Be Playing Football Again

FREDONIA - He didn't look any different.

He didn't act any different.

But one just got the feeling Monday morning that Shane Conlan may have had the weight of the world lifted from his shoulders a little more than 12 hours earlier when he signed a contract with the Buffalo Bills.

In uniform for the first time after ending an almost three-week holdout, the Frewsburg native admitted that it was just fun to be playing football again.

Conlan, the former Penn State All-American, was in the middle of a war of words between his agent, Brett Senior, and Bills General Manager Bill Polian, before, during and after he signed his \$1.7 million contract Sunday evening.

"When they were doing it yesterday, it was really tough on me and it was on my family, but, hey it's over now," he said during a press conference at Fredonia State. "Today I don't care. I'm going to play football now. I can put it all behind me now. I'm ready to go."

Participating in contact drills for the first time in months, Conlan, according to Bills Coach Marv Levy, "seemed to relish it, want to jump in and mix it up, which we thought he would."

Not that Conlan didn't take his shots. One of them even knocked his helmet off.

"Both of my top two chin straps were unbuttoned and I was trying to get them in place before the play (started) and he (believed to be Ronnie Harmon) hit me right in the face mask," Conlan said somewhat sheepishly. "It didn't hurt me."

Welcome to the National Football League.

"I was a little apprehensive, a little nervous coming in late," Conlan said. "I didn't know really what to expect. But they're really good guys. They don't care (about the contract hassle). They know it's between the management and myself."

But, Conlan said, the contract impasse wouldn't have lasted the entire season.

"I wouldn't let it and Brett wouldn't have let it either," Conlan said. "Plus, my family, they were sick of it, I was sick of it. I watched all these TV shows with you guys (media) showing all these guys (Bills) fighting, hitting. It didn't sit well with me so I knew I had to get in there soon."

So now it's back to school for Conlan as he tries to get a crash course on the Bills' defensive scheme.

"Basically, I don't know what I'm doing out there," he admitted. "I know a couple schemes, but not all of them. I'm looking around, looking around to see what the hell I'm doing. But the way I feel, I'll learn it eventually. If I do it wrong, I want to do it wrong aggressively and at full speed."

Levy said, "He was drafted as high as he was by us and regarded as high as he was because he is a tough, aggressive football player," Levy said.

That style, however, has its drawbacks.

"I'm going to be sore as hell tomorrow, but it's going to happen sometime," Conlan said.

In his case, the lumps probably felt pretty good.