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CONLAN WON'T REST ON HIS LAURELS

While Shane Conlan says his selection as The Associated Press' NFL defensive rookie of the year leaves him with a great deal of satisfaction, he's not about to rest on his laurels.

"I'll try to make the Pro Bowl next," the Buffalo Bills' inside linebacker told *The Post-Journal* Tuesday night

The Frewsburg native beat out his own teammate, Cornelius Bennett, in the voting by three sports writers or sportscasters representing each of the NFL's 28 teams.

Conlan began the season at outside linebacker and was moved inside when the Bills acquired Bennett Oct. 30 in a three-team trade. Conlan excelled at his new position - one he hadn't played since high school - helping lead the Bills back to defensive respectability.

"I wanted it (rookie of the year), sure," he said. "But it wasn't a goal. My goal is to play the best I can play. The rest is extra."

Conlan, who missed 18 days of training camp because of contract dispute, finished the season as the Bills' leading tackler with 114 stops in 12 games, including a personal-high of 14 against the Los Angeles Raiders.

Buffalo Coach Marv Levy, in an AP story, compared the 6-3, 230 pound Conlan to Jack Lambert, the defensive star on Pittsburgh's four Super Bowl teams of the 1970's.

"Conlan's only weakness is inexperience in certain pass situations," Levy said. "Everything else is a strength... his physical strength, his speed, his competitiveness, the way he hits and goes through traffic, his stamina. He is an outstanding all-around player"

Ironically, Conlan received the honor in a year when rookies like Vinny Testaverde and Brian Bosworth grabbed most of the early-season headlines. But Testaverde sat the bench in Tampa Bay most of the year and Bosworth didn't overwhelm anybody after signing a \$11 million contract with Seattle.

The rookie of the year award capped quite a week for Conlan as he was selected as fourth alternate for the Pro Bowl last week, and was the only rookie

selected to the AP All-Pro squad, which was announced Monday.

"I didn't think about it," Conlan said of the rookie award. "Everybody else was saying it. I thought it would be nice.

It's an honor. It's great."