

By Scott Kindberg
The Post-Journal
June 25, 1987

Conlan Negotiations Continuing

On many occasions in the last month, I've been asked the question, "Has Shane signed his contract yet?"

The answer to that is "no." Shane Conlan, Frewsburg's favorite son, has not signed his contract with the Buffalo Bills, but negotiations are continuing between Conlan's agent, Brett Senior of Philadelphia, and Bills' General Manager Bill Polian.

The negotiations are likely to continue for a while and then sometime before the start of training camp, which begins the first week of July at Fredonia State, Conlan - the eighth player chosen in the national Football League draft - should sign on the dotted line.

Until he does, however, don't expect to hear a word or read a lot about the behind-the-scenes activities of agent and general manager. Negotiating through the press isn't exactly the best way to conduct business and it certainly isn't Senior's style.

"I haven't set a time," Senior said recently. "My timetable is to have everything cleared up so Shane can be ready (for training camp). July will heat up."

Senior said that he has made a counter-proposal to the Bills' first offer, but is still awaiting a response. "The ball's in the Bills' court right now," he said.

Senior, who represents more than 20 players, including Conlan's former Penn State teammate D.J. Dozier, says both sides are waiting to see what other rookies, like outside linebacker Cornelius Bennett - the second player chosen in the draft - will be signed for.

"I hope the Bills will pay him comparable to other first-rounders," Senior said. "We want to do something that's fair."

"I realize what they (the Bills) have to do and he (Polian) realizes what I'm trying to do. I'm not going in and asking for a Vinny Testaverde contract (reportedly valued at \$8.2 million over six years).

"He's not purposely going to low-ball us."

Senior pointed out that Conlan's value to the Bills can be measured in

several different ways - on as well as off the field. Another plus, he said, is that Conlan was a member of an outstanding college team, which played for the national championship two years in a row.

Linebacker was one of the positions that was the deepest in the draft," Senior said. "They talked about Cornelius Bennett, they talked about Brian Bosworth and they talked about Shane Conlan.

Bennett and Bosworth may have received more national publicity, but some observers believe that Conlan was asked to do so many things in Penn State's defensive scheme, is the best prepared to step in and play in the NFL - particularly against the pass.

Nittany Lions' coach Joe Paterno called Conlan the best linebacker the school's ever produced.

"For Joe Paterno to make a comment like that, you know Shane's an excellent football player," Senior said.