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## **At Last - Conlan Starts Spring Training**

FREDONIA - Shane Conlan of Frewsburg, the Buffalo Bills' No. 1 draft pick, took part in his first training camp practice this morning after signing a contract Sunday evening.

The pact, a reported four-year deal worth \$1.7 million, was signed late Sunday afternoon, ending a holdout which prompted angry words from Bills General Manager Bill Polian.

The agreement between Conlan - the eighth player chosen in April's National Football League draft - his agent, Brett Senior, and Polian was reached about 4-1/2 hours after a noon deadline.

"I thought we had an agreement at noon," Polian said at a news conference yesterday in the Bills' public relations office at Fredonia State. "I thought we were going to get it done, and then there was a misunderstanding over one of the components of the contract, but we finally ironed it out."

Senior could not be reached for comment and Conlan did not wish to meet with the press.

Later they issued statements. When asked by The Associated Press if the three-week holdout was worth it, Conlan answered, "Well, as far as monetarily it was, but you know we'll find out how far fallen behind I am tonight."

Earlier in the day, Polian aired some frustration about agents and negotiating rookie contracts.

"I'm disgusted with the way the entire negotiating process has taken place this year," Polian said. "It's been awful. It's been the toughest in my memory."

"Every negotiation this year -- with the exception of Nate Odomes (one of the Bills' two second-round picks) -- was just cut-throat. I don't know why. It's been terrible on Bob (Ferguson, director of pro personnel) and I. We get paid to do this and we expect to take some lumps in the process, but I think the agents in general this year have been absolutely without morals, without scruples and just absolutely avaricious beyond belief."

That prompted Senior to tell The Associated Press that Polian's remarks were "management's side, rhetoric." He called the Conlan talks "the most unusual negotiations I've ever had."

"Management thinks all the agents are grouped together doing things collectively," he said. "Management is trading notes, more so than what agents are."

Senior denied he was employing a hard line with the Bills so that future draftees wouldn't perceive him as a weak negotiator.

"I don't negotiate that way. I negotiate to get what I feel is the fair market value relative to what's being paid by the other teams," he said. "I don't give consideration to future things."

With the impasse over, Conlan can get down to doing what he has wanted to do all along, play football.

"We're glad to have him," Polian said. "We drafted him to sign him. He's here. He wants to play football. We're glad he's a Buffalo Bill".

It will be up to Conlan to regain the starting left outside linebacker spot that was handed to him in April but taken away by Coach Marv Levy in July when the former Penn State star failed to report with the rest of the rookies.

In Conlan's absence, third-year veteran Hal Garner and Mark Pike, who spent all of last season on injured reserve, have seen the most action at left outside linebacker.

As for what kind of shape Conlan is in, Polian said he wouldn't know "until we see him on the field tomorrow."

Senior has said that Conlan is "in the best shape of his life and he's going to do everything he can to step in and help the team."

Other first-round choices in the top 10 who are under contract are Vinny Testaverde by Tampa Bay, Brent Fullwood by Green Bay and Reggie Rogers by Detroit. Picks still unsigned include Alonzo Highsmith, Cornelius Bennett, Brian Bosworth and Mike Junkin.

Conlan summed up everything by saying, "I can't wait to get out there and start banging."