

# PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

## Roethlisberger evaluation? Details scarce

By Scott Brown  
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Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger is expected to practice Tuesday, his first official team contact since NFL commissioner Roger Goodell suspended him April 21 for boorish behavior.

His return may suggest Roethlisberger, 28, has not been ordered into any in-patient treatment program. Goodell declared the superstar violated the NFL's personal-conduct policy after a booze-filled night in Georgia that ended in a rape allegation.

But don't ask Roethlisberger, the Steelers or the NFL to detail what prompted Goodell to clear the quarterback for practice this week. No one would discuss the nature of the evaluation or the types of tests Roethlisberger underwent.

"It's an early intervention step to address a potential problem if an NFL employee demonstrates conduct that is troubling," said NFL spokesman Greg Aiello, who declined to discuss specifics.

Agent Ryan Tollner, who represents Roethlisberger, also declined to comment. So did the National Football League Players Association.

"We're informed of his progress in the programs," said union spokesman Carl Francis, who declined to be more specific.

Roethlisberger is the first player to be suspended without being charged with a crime since Goodell implemented the personal-conduct policy in April 2007.

Two clinical psychologists contacted by The Tribune-Review were asked what might take place during the behavioral evaluation.

The psychologists agreed to speak in general terms since neither man has examined Roethlisberger.

Dr. Paul J. Friday, a Pittsburgh-based clinical psychologist, and Dr. Leonard Simms, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Buffalo, both said Roethlisberger would have undergone a battery of tests during his evaluation.

One test might be the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Friday said.

It is a 567-question examination that reveals different aspects of a patient's personality -- and helps doctors determine whether some sort of disorder exists.

A key element of MMPI and other standardized tests used in behavioral evaluations, Friday said, is they are nearly impossible to manipulate.

"You can tell whether somebody is faking or not," Friday said. "They're very, very sophisticated mathematical, embedded questions that are evaluated that if you answer in a particular way, you will fall into a group of people who are faking good or faking bad."

Simms said standardized tests only account for a fraction of the information gathered during evaluations.

Simms, the primary investigator in Buffalo's personality, psychopathology and psychometrics lab, said he would also interview the patient extensively and people who know that person well.

He said he would also examine public documents - such as police reports, affidavits and statements -- prepared about the subject.

"You ask him about problems he gets into, you ask him about his history and his attitudes and his behavior and everything that seems relevant to the questions you are trying to answer," Simms said.

Friday said behavioral evaluation should help determine whether immaturity or a personality disorder -- substance or alcohol abuse falls under the umbrella of disorders -- led to the off-the-field trouble that has stained Roethlisberger's reputation.

If a personality-disorder diagnosis is made, Friday said, it is not easy determining how to proceed.

"They're very, very difficult to treat because people don't give them up," Friday said. "They're ingrained armor. They are the things that have gotten them through life. A personality disorder is like a cable that runs through your life, and it affects everything that you do."

Given Roethlisberger's history of head injuries -- three concussions since 2004 and a near-fatal motorcycle crash in 2006 -- Simms said the quarterback likely underwent neurological exams as well as a CAT scan.

"If I had a client like that, who I knew had some likelihood for head injuries, I'd be interested in looking at decision-making problems and impulsivity," Simms said. "I'd want to assess for something called a frontal-lobe syndrome."

Frontal-lobe syndrome can affect social behavior and lead to dubious decision making, Simms said.

The only thing that can be said with certainty about Roethlisberger's evaluation

is that it went well enough to convince Goodell to allow him to return to football.

"I'm sure we'll never know (what took place) exactly," Simms said, "because that stuff will be private and confidential and all covered by privacy laws."

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