

Southwest Guilford Picks Gill as Coach

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Craig Gill was picked as the man to pump some life into Southwest Guilford's struggling football program yesterday.

Gill, 38, was named the head football coach at Southwest after 14 years at Piedmont 3-A Conference rival High Point Andrews.

Gill, who has been the head track coach and the offensive line coach for the football team at Andrews since 1977, officially accepted the position on Monday. He replaces Donnie Kiefer, who resigned in December.

"I just wanted to be a head football coach," Gill said. "I don't have to move, and I just felt that it was an excellent place to coach and teach. There was nothing wrong with Andrews. Leaving there is one of the hardest things I've had to do in my life."

When the position opened in December, Gill



CRAIG GILL

was one of 73 applicants, according to Rusty Lee, the athletics director at Southwest. Lee said that the school interviewed six people for the position, and Gill's qualifications best matched up with the school's wish list.

"We were looking for someone who was a real strong disciplinarian," Lee said. "But also someone who had a genuine care for the kids. We were looking for someone local, but someone who also had a reputation as a winner and a good name. All that pointed to Craig Gill."

Gill's appointment comes just five days after his Red Raiders track team captured its fourth consecutive Class 3-A state championship.

"They offered me the job near the end of the track season, and they were kind enough to keep it quiet," Gill said. "I told my kids (the track team) that they would be the first to know if I decided to do anything, and they were. We had our cookout (Tuesday) and I told them then. I still get upset when I think about that, because I love every one of those kids."

One of his first priorities, Gill said, is to get a staff in place and begin preparations for the 1991 season.

Southwest, after enjoying six straight winning seasons from 1979 to 1984, has had losing seasons in four of the last six, including a 1-8-1 overall record and an 0-7 mark in the Piedmont Athletic 3-A Conference last season.

"The biggest thing I'm going to do is teach fundamentals," Gill said. "Get some sound defense taught, and develop a program. I want to teach the kids the same terminology all the way through, and build the program to where we can be good year in and year out."

A native of Durham, Gill graduated from Southern Durham High in 1970 after a standout career in football and baseball. He went on to play center on the football team for four years at Elon College, graduating in 1974.

He then moved on to graduate school at UNC-Chapel Hill, where he received a master's degree in physiology in 1975. He took his first teaching and coaching job at Henderson Vance High School in the fall of '75 as an assistant football coach and head track coach.

He held that position for two years, before taking the track and football positions at Andrews before the 1977-78 school year.