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## Sundberg eyes Gill's job

By Mike Reilley

Daily Nebraskan Staff Writer Ask almost any 10-year-old Lincoln boy what he wants to be when he gets older, and the answer is certain to be one of the following: the president, an astronaut or a Nebraska football player.

One exception is Nebraska senior quarterback Craig Sund-

In 1971, when a fleet-footed wingback named Johnny Rodgers was leading the Huskers to

their last national title, Sundberg was beginning his football career, playing for Leon's Mar-Let in Lincoln's midget football

But, unlike most of his teammates, the 10-year-old son of former Husker gridder David Sundberg never envisioned himself in a Nebraska uniform. Becoming a college football player, Sundberg says, was not a boy-

hood dream. Football was only a piece of the puzzle in Sundberg's life.

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"It was a weird deal," the 6-1, 190-pound signal-caller said. "I wasn't the typical kid who loved just athletics. I loved doing a lot of things, not just football."

The 1980 graduate of Lincoln Southeast High School has inherited the huge task of replacing one-third of the "Scoring Explosion": Turner Gill, last year's quarterback who now plays for the Canadian Football League.

The route Sundberg took to the top of Nebraska's first depth chart of the 1984 season was typical of most college football

After his midget football days, Sundberg spent a year in Southeast's freshman program before moving up to the varsity his sophomore year. He saw little action during his initial season with the varsity. But, under the guidance of head coach Frank Solich, Sundberg developed into an all-state quarterback his junior year.

Along with the all-state honors came the college recruiters. Five major colleges contacted Sundberg, but none followed through with an offer. Then Nebraska stepped into the picture.

"Coach (Tom) Osborne told me they were looking at me very strongly," Sundberg said. "Going into my senior year, I was pretty sure I was going to Nebraska, but it wasn't automatic."

Chuck Mizerski replaced Solich, who accepted a coaching offer a Nebraska at the beginning of Sundberg's senior year. Mizerski was impressed with the returning two-year letterman.

"Craig is a smart football player with a big-league arm," Mizerski said. "But the thing that impressed the most when I first met him was he oozed confidence in his ability, and it rubbed off on his teammates."

Sundberg saw a good deal of playing time for a third-string quarterback last year, backing up seniors Gill and Nate Mason. He scored four times, and completed nine of 12 passes for 159 yards and two touchdowns.

With all of the pressure Sundberg has received about being Gill's replacement, he has managed to keep a low-key approach toward the situation.

"The only difference I see in preparing for this year than any other year is I realize that this is my last year at Nebraska," Sund-berg said. "If I play like I know I can play, I could start the first game."

Sundberg credits much of his success on the gridiron to the way his parents brought him up. Sundberg said his parents "have been the backbone of my athletics, someone I could always turn to."

Linda Sundberg said her son was a self-motivated athlete. "We've never pushed Craig. We've never needed to," she said.

"They let me be my own person and always let me know they cared about me," Sundberg said.



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