

UCI Athletics



Nico Ruiz Joins NWSL Club Portland Thorns FC

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Women's Soccer

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IRVINE, Calif. --- A vital piece of the UCI women's soccer for the last three seasons, Nico Ruiz is making the move up to the National Women's Soccer League for Portland Thorns FC.

"It was a pleasure to work at UCI and I'm excited about this next chapter", Ruiz said of his new position as Video Analyst Specialist with the Thorns.

Ruiz will be collaborating with the coaching staff to analyze opposition, create scouting and opposition reports, conduct halftime analyses, and work on individual development plans while also handling filming and editing training sessions to provide actionable insights much like his role with the Anteaters.

"Nico has been a smart, hard-working, technically-savvy member of our staff", boasted head coach Scott Juniper. "He has helped us grow the performance analysis side of our development model and we are very grateful for everything he has done. It doesn't surprise me that he has found his way to the pros and we all wish him every conceivable success."

When Ruiz initially joined the Anteater staff, it was to manage the performance area of the GPS systems the student-athlete use during matches and training. "These gps trackers allowed us to collect running metric data such as top speed, accelerations, decelerations, total distance covered, heat maps, and more to help create reports which

we utilized to monitor physical output, manage recovery, finding fatigue points in games, prevent injuries, optimize training cycles, and identify areas for individual performance improvement."

All of the data Ruiz was collecting not only supported the coaching staff, but was also useful to the athletic trainers and strength and conditioning coaches to enhance their efforts in player recovery, injury prevention, and performance optimization. It would also be put to use for graduating athletes providing GPS reports to help them build an athletic resume when getting looked at by professional teams.

Over time, his role expanded to becoming the Director of Performance Analysis to include video analysis, something that's always been a passion of his. "Before matches, I collaborated with the coaching staff to identify key areas of focus for upcoming opponents. I would then create video reports with telestrations, highlighting strengths, weaknesses, and tactical considerations to help us prepare effectively." That insight continued into the matches where Ruiz would observe and take notes on opposition tendencies, individual player performances, and key points identified by the coaching staff to help with real-time analysis that shaped strategies and even halftime adjustments by the staff.

In addition to these responsibilities, Ruiz took time to scout and contribute to developing formats for ID camps along with helping run youth camps to help further support the program's player development initiatives. Nico's brother, Tomas, even joined the program's staff last season helping his brother and the staff with the data collection and observations.

In Ruiz's three seasons as part of the Anteater program, UCI experienced a great deal of success winning its second and third of three straight Big West Championships and reaching the NCAA Tournament and playing into the Sweet Sixteen in those two seasons.



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