

# Ricci Luyties, one of the NCAA's most decorated setters, incorporates Noah System into practices



Unlike many other occasions when the Noah System has helped poor teams become good teams, the UC San Diego women's volleyball program was already a powerhouse. The Tritons had won six NCAA Division III National Championships and finished runners-up five times since 1981.

UC San Diego moved to the NCAA Division II level in 2000 and continued its tradition of excellence. The Tritons have qualified for the national tournament 11 times, including the last six years in a row.

So when the UC San Diego job opened prior to the 2010 season, it caught the attention of the coach at Southern Mississippi. Ricci Luyties had been the Golden Eagles coach the past six seasons and in 2009, he led Southern Mississippi to a 27-5 overall record and a 14-2 mark in Conference USA.

He was an assistant for three seasons at the University of Colorado prior to his stint at Southern Mississippi. During his time at Colorado, he helped the Buffaloes reach the NCAA Division I Tournament twice.

"It was a great opportunity to come home," Luyties said.

Luyties had previously coached in the San Diego area before joining the college ranks. He was the head coach of the La Jolla High School boys and girls varsity programs as well as leading several top-level club teams.

That's not to mention his stellar career as a player.

# Ricci Luyties, one of the NCAA's most decorated setters, incorporates Noah System into practices

Luyties was one of the most decorated setters in NCAA history. He helped lead UCLA to four consecutive NCAA Championships from 1981-84. His teams had an overall record of 126-7, including a pair of undefeated seasons.

Luyties is the only player to start on four national men's volleyball title teams in NCAA history and was a two-time All-American as well as being named the NCAA Most Valuable Player in 1983 and 1984. His No. 11 jersey was retired in 1996, a year after being elected into the UCLA Hall of Fame.

At the international level, Luyties won a pair of gold medals as a setter on the U.S. National Team from 1981-88. Luyties captured gold with players like Karch Kiraly and Steve Timmons at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, South Korea. He was part of the national team when it won gold at the 1987 Pan American Games.

So when Ricci Luyties talks about sets, players and coaches pay close attention. That's why it's a little extra special that Luyties marvels at the prospects of the Noah System, and what it can do for volleyball and for his program.

"I first saw the Noah System at a demonstration for the UC San Diego women's and men's basketball teams," Luyties said. "My assistant, Mas Shibata, was an assistant at Stanford with Coach John Dunning. Mas had told me about the Noah System. When there was an opportunity to see it, I had to witness it for myself."

Luyties immediately was impressed upon watching the Noah System in action. The wheels in his head began to churn.

"I instantly started formulating how we could use it," Luyties said. "I could see Noah's potential to help setters. I really liked how Noah helped setters see the lines and receive instant feedback."

Luyties said that not only did Noah help his setters, but also his hitters.

"The feedback part of Noah is really good," Luyties said. "The arcs that are drawn on the computer printouts are invaluable. They really give you a good idea of what you are doing. Noah improved our hitters because we would have them hitting off the sets. The hitters could hear the speed coming off the computer and what height the set was going to be."

It must have been quite a sight when one of the greatest setters in U.S. volleyball history tried his hand on Noah.

"I actually practiced on Noah a couple of times," Luyties said. "It's very easy to change the angle and such a great tool to use to learn."

The Tritons finished the 2011 ranked No. 16 nationally after posting a 22-6 record. UC San Diego lost in the second round of the NCAA Division II National Tournament.

Luyties said Noah helped two UC San Diego setters improve their game.

Versatile senior Roxanne Brunsting led the Tritons in assists and service aces while finishing third in kills, dig and points. Brunsting didn't start setting until 2010 and recorded 626 assists to give her over 1,000 for her career. She set a career-high with 37 assists in a game against San Francisco State in 2011.

Freshmen setter Amber Hawthorne posted 527 assists for a 5.17 average.

# Ricci Luyties, one of the NCAA's most decorated setters, incorporates Noah System into practices

"What Noah does best is help a setter become consistent," Luyties said. "It also reinforces what coaches say. When you are training setters, saying the same things over and over gets tiring. But with Noah giving instant feedback, it's a great tool for a coach. The players also love it because they are always craving feedback."

Luyties said his program is still in the discovery phase with Noah. He believes in its technology and now wants to find ways to unleash that potential.

"This was our first season with Noah, and we didn't use it full-time," Luyties said. "But it's definitely a great tool for us to have because it's so black and white. You know if the set is good or bad."