

# RUDY FERNANDEZ

**ASSISTANT COACH - MEN'S FLAG NATIONAL TEAM**



**HOMETOWN:** Miami, Fla.

**RESIDENCE:** Las Vegas, Nev.

**YEARS COACHING USNT:** 1

Fernandez is in his first year as an assistant coach on USA Football's U.S. Men's National Team. He played flag football for 15 years and has more than two decades of coaching experience.

Fernandez joined the U.S. National Team Program in 2023, helping to lead the 17U U.S. Boys' National Team to a gold medal in USA Football's Junior International Cup as an assistant coach. He became the head coach of the 15U U.S. Boys' National Team in 2024 and guided the team to the Junior International Cup's gold medal podium.

Fernandez's success as a head coach continued in 2025. He and assistant coach Todd Thomson transitioned to the 17U U.S. Boys' National Team, taking the reins of a team that suffered a defeat at the hands of Canada in the semifinals of the 2024 Junior International Cup. History did not repeat itself, as Fernandez's team defeated Canada 38-19 in the 17U Boys' Gold Medal Match.

"We had a chip on our shoulder, and the boys responded," Fernandez said. "It was probably the proudest I've ever been of winning a gold medal with the U.S."

## **NEW ROLE, SAME MISSION**

This is the first year that the U.S. Men's and Women's National Teams will feature two assistant coaches. For Fernandez, the chance to travel abroad and coach the men's team is the culmination of years of hard work and accomplishments.

"It's an honor. It means everything to me," Fernandez said. "I've been coaching for a long

time, and to get this opportunity to represent my country on such a larger stage is a dream come true."

## **FAMILY LEGACY**

In 2005, Fernandez founded RYAN Football in memory of his late brother, Ryan, who embodied a team-oriented and giving spirit. Under Fernandez's leadership, RYAN Football won numerous regional and national championships.

"After my brother passed away in 2001, I was thinking about a way to honor him and his name. It came organically through flag football," Fernandez explained. "I was coaching at a small private elementary school. We had a lot of really good athletes. So I proposed playing in a tournament and naming the team RYAN Football. The parents thought it was incredible, and the kids were excited. I never imagined RYAN Football would accomplish what it has from 2005 to today. Hearing the parents in the crowd chant, 'Ryan, Ryan' makes the game about so much more than the wins and losses. It makes me feel very proud because I know I'm keeping my brother's legacy alive."

Fernandez's son, Ryan, and daughter, Aryana, also carry on his brother's legacy.

"My daughter's name is Aryana, which is Ryan with an A at the beginning and end," Fernandez said. "Both of them have completely changed my life. God trusted me with two of his angels, and I take that job very seriously. I always say that football saved my life, and my kids changed my life. They gave me a bigger purpose to live for."

## **GOLD RUNS IN THE FAMILY**

Fernandez's son, Ryan, joined the U.S. National Team program as a member of the 15U U.S. Boys' National Team in 2024. The father and son duo earned gold medals together before Fernandez was elevated to the 17U level for 2025. Ryan remained at the 15U level and helped lead the team to its fourth consecutive gold medal.

"To get that opportunity with my son in 2024 was something I'll never forget," Fernandez said. "Watching him this year play at the 15U level while I was coaching 17U was a completely different experience. To just sit back, be a dad and watch my son represent his country was a dream come true."

## **MENTORING THE FUTURE**

Fernandez has coached or mentored more than 30 athletes who have gone on to compete in college athletics. He will also be making that leap in the near future to serve as the offensive coordinator for Nevada State University's first-ever women's flag football team. The university is adding women's flag football and men's track and field as its inaugural athletics programs in the spring of 2026.

"My job as a coach is not done when the tournament is over. I'm very big on building and maintaining relationships with the athletes and just being there for them beyond football," Fernandez said. "Being a teenager isn't easy. It's always good for the athletes to have somebody else to speak to. Watching them play at the highest level makes me so proud because I know the amount of work they put in to reach their goals."