

Innovative wrist surgery helps athlete return to the court after decades of pain

INTRO: For years, a lifelong athlete was sidelined by chronic wrist pain that took more than just her ability to compete — it took a part of her identity. Now, thanks to an innovative surgical approach at Mayo Clinic, one Minnesota woman is back on the court, returning to the game that means so much to her.

Jason Howland has her story.

VIDEO	AUDIO
	"Being an athlete has always been a part of my life."
	A former college basketball player, 54-year-old Tami Lucius also loved playing tennis. But devastating wrist pain kept her off the court for two decades.
	"I didn't know what it was, but it was always on the outside of my wrist."
Tami Lucius Patient White Bear Lake, Minnesota	"I really had a sense of loss with my life and with that sense of community from not being able to be in sports."
	"And then a girlfriend of mine from high school, out of the blue, said, 'Hey, come and play pickle with me.'"
	"I knew pickleball was something that I was going to love."
	But unfortunately, almost immediately, Tami's wrist pain returned.
	"It got so bad that I couldn't even do the acts of daily living. So even making a bed, washing my hair, it didn't matter what I was doing, the pain was always there and the instability was always there."
	Rather than giving up another sport and a community she loved, Tami came to Mayo Clinic ...
	"She was struggling."

	... to see hand and wrist specialist Dr. Sanj Kakar.
Sanj Kakar, M.D. Orthopedic Surgery Mayo Clinic	"I think the biggest frustration for her was the pain was affecting not only sport, but also activities of daily living."
	"He was such a kind person, and he knew that, for me, this journey was more than just the pickle, it was part of my life and my identity. And he took the time to really share with me what he felt we needed to do."
	"Just by listening to her, examining her, looking at the imaging, we then were able to pinpoint the major causes of her problem."
	"The TFCC, or the triangular fibrocartilage complex, sits right in this area."
	"She had a problem not only with that TFCC, or that sort of shock absorber for that part of the wrist, but also the tendon."
	"So for Tami — especially with sport — hitting tophand, topspin, forehand, backhands — anything with twisting and grip would cause pain in here."
	With Tami's wrist problem diagnosed, Dr. Kakar recommended a new surgical technique.
	"What we call the over-the-top TFCC technique, which allows us to more accurately place stitches, or sutures, in the tear exactly where the tear is, in a more minimally invasive manner."
	"It's a very precise method to fixing an area which basically allows you to twist your forearm."
	After successful surgery at Mayo Clinic, Tami is now back on the pickleball court, three times a week — pain free.
	"My wrist is the most stable joint on my entire body today."
	"It does bring tears to my eyes because I didn't realize how much I missed sports in general. I get such a sense of identity who I am, my passion for competition, my passion for people."

	"Mayo didn't just give me my wrist back and the ability to play pickle again, Mayo gave me my life back."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland.