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SEPT / OCT
2025

From Pain to Purpose: How a Professional Pickleball Player Reclaimed His Life After Colostomy Surgery

via UOAA Blog Post May 19, 2025/Ostomy Association of North Central Oklahoma, Jun3 2025

Rob Nunnery is returning to professional sports—and raising awareness about living fully with an ostomy.

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When Rob Nunnery stepped onto the pickleball court for the first time post-surgery, it wasn't just about hitting balls. It was about proving—to himself and others—that life after a colostomy isn't just livable. It can be powerful.

The professional pickleball player and podcast host spent the better part of two years in unrelenting pain, battling what turned out to be severe perianal Crohn's disease. It began in March 2022 with a painful abscess—but quickly spiraled into a complex web of fistulas, surgeries, and daily limitations.



"I tried to manage it for as long as I could," Rob says. "But the pain never really left. I couldn't sit. I couldn't train. I was just trying to survive."

Through it all, Rob kept competing—and remarkably, he reached the #1 ranking in men's doubles at points during both 2023 and 2024. But by early 2025, after five colorectal surgeries and years of pushing through chronic pain, Rob made a life-changing decision: he underwent a colostomy.

A New Chapter Begins

Rob had the surgery on February 20, 2025—a choice he once feared but now credits with giving him his life back.

"I was scared. I had all the same questions and doubts," he says. "But I reached a point where I had nothing left to prove to anyone—and everything to gain if I could just get out of pain."

Just seven weeks post-op, Rob was preparing to return to competition. His first tournament back was the Dubai Open this May and despite it being a lot to manage physically he won in pro men's doubles and got silver in pro mixed doubles! "I'm

MEETINGS

Meetings and gatherings are held at the hall at Community of Christ Church on Arthur and 8th. Throughout the year we will have a combination of face to face and ZOOM or a hybrid of both for our get togethers. We look forward to meeting you.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

September 18 - Chat Room 7:00 pm by Zoom - Q & A's in the ostomy world (zoom coordinates page 2)

October 4 - Step Up 9:30 - 12:30 (see poster page 4) (Regina & Saskatoon)

December 6 - Regina Christmas Lunch at 12:00 pm
Western Pizza on 9th Avenue North



Image Courtesy of Freepik

Cont'd on page 3

"Greetings from Patty"



Hello Friends!

Summer 2025 is in the books. Hope everyone was safe out there. It was a summer filled with smoky days, windy days, hot and cool days and perfect days. We had it all! Our summer was filled with joy as our oldest son got married. It was a day filled with love, laughter and family. We ended our summer with a visit to Toronto to the Canadian Women's Golf tournament (Congrats Brooke Henderson) and to watch the Blue Jays game. Enjoying our beautiful country!

Thank you to everyone who attended our seminar, Healing Yourself and Uplifting Others, in Regina on May 3rd. What a fabulous turnout with fantastic speakers! Starting with Christine Day helping us live our best lives as we get older, Karen and Carmen from Hollister who educated us on how appliances are made, Marisol, our favourite exercise guru, reminding us of the importance of movement, and ending with an emotional and impactful personal story from Keri Forsgren. What a great opportunity for new and established members to share stories and advice.

Also a huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who donated to sending kids to camp. From personal donations to coming out to our Pizza Pasta Fundraiser June 4th, we are so very grateful to you for choosing to donate to camp. We sponsored 3 kids who had the opportunity to enjoy a summer camp full of fun and new friendships. You will see their smiling faces and heartfelt thank you cards in this newsletter.

SAVE THE DATE IN REGINA & SASKATOON: Step Up Annual Awareness & Fundraising Walk will be held in both cities on Saturday, October 4. This will be a great opportunity to meet some new people, talk, ask questions or just hang out. Come and join us for the morning. Regina's event will be held at the Community of Christ Church hall (4710 – 8th Avenue). In Saskatoon we will meet at the Saskatoon Field House (2020 College Drive). Both events will begin at 9:30 for coffee and registration. We're encouraging people to come, whether living with an ostomy is new or years old. Family and friends welcome.

SAVE THE DATE IN REGINA: We are already planning our Christmas get together. This year it will be held on Saturday, December 6 at noon at Western Pizza, 9th Avenue North. More details will be forthcoming.

We hope you consider attending the Step Up event either in Regina or Saskatoon. We have new people who we hope will attend so it's great to have our longer term members there too. This year we have asked a lot of you financially and we so appreciate your generosity and dedication to Ostomy Saskatchewan. All the events and activities we do are because of you and for you. Whether you have had your ostomy for 54 years or 4 months, we all need someone to champion us on. We at Ostomy Saskatchewan are here for you! Let's get together and cheer each other on!

Chat Room – not a meeting but a chance to meet others with an ostomy or see some of your fellow members. We'll ZOOM Thursday, September 18th at 7:00. We'll open up with a topic but let the discussion go where it will. ZOOM coordinates below.

MISSION STATEMENT

Ostomy Saskatchewan is a mutual support group for the benefit of people who have had, or are about to have intestinal or urinary diversion surgery.

Our purpose is:

- To help people with intestinal and/or urinary diversions to lead full and productive lives and to provide information and emotional support to their families and caregivers.
- To educate the public about intestinal and urinary diversion surgery.
- To provide trained visitors to someone who has undergone intestinal and/or urinary diversions, including preoperative and postoperative visits or phone calls, at the request of the individual, an ostomy nurse (NSWOC) or physician

ZOOM COORDINATES

CHAT ROOM

September 18, 2025 07:00 PM

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88917252056?pwd=IasIc6QR1dq0th0bTfosL2tBalOP9m.1>

Meeting ID: 889 1725 2056

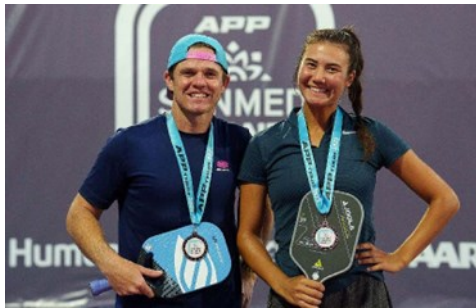
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Article continued from front page

proud that I went and even more proud of the result being my first tournament back,” Rob says.

Up next, you can follow his return to the Association of Pickleball Players’ APP Tour with the New York City Open May 20-25.

Rebuilding from scratch, this New York stop is where he won both men’s and mixed doubles two years earlier.



Breaking the Silence

For Rob, this comeback is about more than rankings. It’s about visibility and impact.

“There’s so much stigma around ostomies, especially in men and athletes,” he says. “I want to show people that you can still perform at the highest level. You can still live fully. You can still compete.”

He’s deeply aware that not everyone sees examples of active adults—let alone professional athletes—thriving with an ostomy. That’s why he’s choosing to speak out, and to live publicly in a way that helps others feel less alone.

Support and Strength

Rob credits his significant other, Malan Doty, as his rock throughout this entire journey.

“She’s been through it all with me. Every surgery, every setback, every painful day—she never left,” he says. “There’s no way I’d be here without her support.”

Now, Rob wants to be that kind of support for others—especially young people, men, and athletes facing ostomy surgery.

Rob was told of UOAA by his stoma nurse at the Mayo Clinic. “The (ostomy.org) website has been my go-to in terms of education and learning how to navigate having an ostomy from supplies to nutrition to exercise. The travel info was super helpful on my recent trip to compete too.”

Rob is thankful for the work UOAA does to support the ostomy community. “It has made a huge difference in my own journey.”

More Than a Comeback

As Rob steps back onto the court, he’s not just chasing points. He’s showing that strength can look different than it used to—and that adapting is its own form of power. “I want to show that thriving with an ostomy is not just possible—it’s powerful.”

Tips he’d give to other ostomates on being active? “Ease into it. Listen to your body, don’t try to do too much too soon. Going on walks was so grounding for me. I’m lucky to live close to a beach, so feet in the sand and having less pain during walks have been amazing. And good for me mentally too.” Rob shares.

“My colostomy gave me my life back. If I can help just one person stop feeling ashamed or afraid because of their bag, then all of this will have meant something more.”

You can follow Rob on (Instagram @robnunnery) and sign-up for his daily newsletter link at (read.robnunnery.com) ■

How Do I Clean Around My Stoma?

All you need to clean around your stoma is warm water and either a washcloth or a soft disposable paper towel. Using sterile gauze and wearing gloves to change your own pouching system can be expensive and is unnecessary. REMEMBER, you are NOT dealing with a sterile area.

Using alcohol to clean the area is equally unnecessary and can be very drying to the skin. Also, it is not recommended to use baby wipes or pre-moistened towelettes as they may contain chemicals that remain trapped on the skin and can cause a rash. Soaps, including ones that are moisturizing (Oil of Olay, Dove) are not needed and can actually hinder the pouching system from sticking well on your skin and contribute to leaks. If you are showering without wearing a pouching system and soap flows down onto your stoma and skin, just rinse the area well afterwards. This is not a concern.

When washing your stoma, you may notice small specks of blood on your cloth. This is completely normal and expected. The stoma tissue contains small blood vessels close to the surface that may bleed, especially if you are taking blood thinners.

Do I need to “air out” my skin when changing my pouching system to keep it healthy? No, this is not necessary. It may feel good to “air out” for a while but this is not required in order to have the skin remain healthy. This may also be difficult if your stoma is active!!

from Vancouver (BC) Ostomy HighLife; via Northern Virginia The Pouch; Ostomy Association of North Central Oklahoma

COME ONE, COME ALL!

October 4th is WORLD OSTOMY DAY this year

The annual Ostomy Canada Step Up for Ostomy is our major awareness and fundraiser event. Saskatchewan has been participating for many years. Whether you're new to the ostomy world or have been around for many years come out and celebrate. Come join us, family and friends welcome. We'll have an opportunity to spend time with each other and ask any questions that come to mind.

REGINA Step Up Annual Awareness & Fundraising Walk

Community of Christ Church Hall – Arthur & 8th Street

0930 – 1015 Registration – coffee and sign in

1015 – 1100 Awareness Walk in the neighbourhood

1100 – 1230 Meet & greet and light lunch

SASKATOON Step Up Annual Awareness & Fundraising Walk

Fieldhouse 2nd level - 2020 College Drive

0930 – 1015 Registration – coffee and sign in

1015 – 1100 Awareness Walk in the neighbourhood

1100 – 1230 Meet & greet and light lunch



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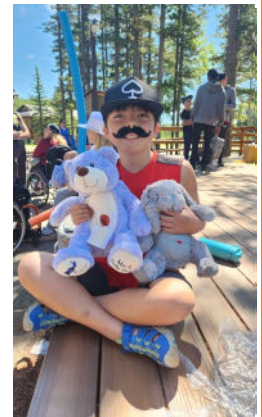
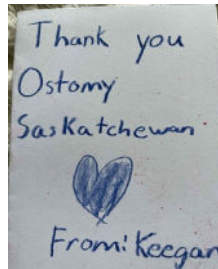
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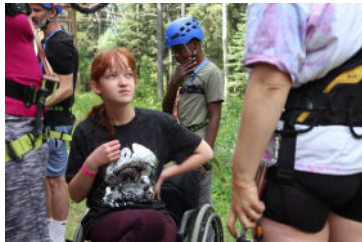
*Here are our 2025 happy campers. It was a great camp week.
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Aiden



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5 TIPS for SELF-CARE

Self-care is the practice of taking care of yourself, physically and mentally. When you take care of yourself, you are better equipped to care for other people in your life. There are small things that you can do on a daily basis that have been shown to lower the stress that you may be experiencing and help you live happier. The Buddhist monk Haemin Sunim recommends the following five tips to take care of yourself.

1. **Breathe.** Take a deep breath and become mindful of the air moving into and out of your lungs. By slowing down, focusing on your breaths and trying to breathe more deeply, you will feel more centered and focused on the present.
2. **Accept.** Things will happen every day that you may find difficult or anxiety-inducing, but try to accept these feelings. Your mind will be able to rest and in the long term, you will learn to cope better.
3. **Write it down.** When you are having feelings of stress, often the case is simply that there are too many thoughts going on inside your brain: tasks you have to complete, worries about people in your life, even what's for dinner tomorrow. If you write it all down, you will be able to visualize your list. From there, you should start with the easiest task to complete, which will give you momentum to work on the second task, and so on. This will help you to feel less overwhelmed.
4. **Talk about it.** Sometimes you just need an opportunity to talk about your problems with a close friend. Try to find a non-judgmental person that you are able to share with (and you never know when they might need an open ear to share with as well!)
5. **Take a walk.** Breathing fresh air to clear your mind is a simple way to release stress. Moving around and using physical energy will allow you to relive built-up mental energy.

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/10/well/mind/self-care-buddism-monk-meditation-stress-anxiety-calm-Haemin-Sunim.html> via Nightingale Medical Supplies



ODD SPOT -- Did You Know?

Loud sausages

Bangers and mash, or sausages with mashed potatoes, is a favourite meal for many Brits. The reason they're called bangers apparently goes back to World War I when sausages used to pop – or bang – while being fried in a pan because of their high water content, due to meat rationing.

But what about email?

The brand name Spam came from a contest winner. This is one of those interesting facts you probably thought you knew but actually didn't. Contrary to American mythology, Spam is not an acronym for "Scientifically Processed Animal Matter" or "Shoulder of Pork and Ham." In 1937, Hormel, the company that makes Spam, sponsored a naming contest for the new product. Kenneth Daigneau, a New York actor, who was also the brother of a Hormel VP, won \$100 for coming up with "Spam." Stories vary on whether Daigneau created the name as a blending of "spiced ham" or if he conceived the name before the product was even created. Nonetheless, Hormel executives loved it, and the rest is history.



Lemons float, but limes sink

Try this easy science experiment, and you'll find that lime slices drop to the bottom of a glass, while lemon slices float at the top. But why? This is one of those things to wonder about that you need the answer for, so here it is: Limes are denser than lemons. Now you're going to go buy a lemon and a lime and see if this is true, aren't you?



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on Freepik

Now What???

So, you're home from the hospital and everything feels a bit overwhelming and confusing. There's a pretty good chance your medical support sent home a package with information that can help you through these early days. Take a look for that too.

Initially I remember thinking these questions. Will people know by looking at me? What will I wear? Do I smell? (because I think we all think we smell in the beginning.) Can I eat normal food? Can I still have sex? All of these questions that make us worry if life will ever feel normal again. The internet has a wealth of information. If you're not familiar with how to search for information perhaps you have a family member or friend who can assist you. Here are some questions that may come up for you. We will carry this special item in every newsletter, changing questions. Always happy to receive more questions (carpentier.deb@gmail.com).

What type of under garments are helpful with an ostomy bag? Good undergarments for ostomy wear include high-waisted underwear, shapewear, or ostomy-specific undergarments. Others feel the right undershirt plays a big role in holding and camouflaging the pouch. These options help to support and conceal the ostomy pouch, preventing leaks and providing comfort and confidence. A person just needs to be aware of not having clothing that is overly tight over the pouching system. There are many companies online who provide undergarment options.

What if I feel I'm in crisis? I'm leaking through my appliance often? I can't get things under control? What do I do? There's no doubt leaking and skin irritation can cause distress. Weekends and holidays are particularly difficult. Try not to panic and do what you can to stay calm. What's important is keeping the skin clean and dry and if irritated use stoma powder. When possible contact your NSWOC clinic, which we have in Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Regina (listing on page 13). There are times the three major suppliers are able to provide telephone support but nurses are not always available and they aren't in a good position to provide advice for appliances if you're already under NSWOC care.

Coloplast Care Advisor: 1-866-293-6349 Email: casupport@coloplast.com

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Hollister : 1.866.789.7574 Email : securestartcanada@hollister.com.

Can I have a sex life? Yes, it is possible to have a fulfilling sex life after ostomy surgery. While it may require adjustments and communication with your partner, many individuals with ostomies maintain or even improve their sex lives. Open communication with your partner about your feelings, concerns, and any physical limitations is crucial. Here's one item on intimacy after an ostomy from Hollister. <https://www.hollister.ca/en-ca/ostomycare/ostomylearningcenter/livingwithanostomy/sexafterostomysurgerydosanddents>

I see on line or magazines where people are showing their ostomy bags. Why do they do that? People choose to show off their ostomy bags for a variety of reasons, primarily to raise awareness, combat stigma, and empower themselves and others living with similar conditions. Sharing their experiences helps normalize life with an ostomy and encourages open conversations about bodily differences. Ultimately, whether or not to show an ostomy bag is a personal decision. Some people find it empowering to be open about their ostomies, while others may prefer to keep it private. There is no right or wrong way to manage life with an ostomy, and it's up to each individual to decide what feels best for them.

I forget how to change my appliance. What are the steps?

If you have an information booklet from the hospital or clinic when you were discharged, check there for some instructions. Here's a link to instructions and another link to a video as to how to change your appliance. If you need to call your NSWOC or who is your contact person.

<https://www.ostomycanada.ca/ostomy-care-basics/general-management/changing-your-pouching-system/> and <https://www.veganostomy.ca/?s=how+to+change+my+appliance>

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Co-facilitator	Deb Carpentier	306-536-3319
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Partner & Family Support	Bob Fearnside	306-924-5993

Letters to the Editor . . .

Dear Readers, our aim is to provide you with articles that inform and entertain. Every personal story has an impact for others. Please consider writing your story, I'd be happy to assist. Here are some ways to contact me or connect with a larger on-line group.

Deb Carpentier

carpentier.deb@gmail.com

Phone: 306-536-3319

<https://ostomysaskatchewan.ca>

<https://www.ostomycanada.ca>

Facebook coordinates:

Ostomy Saskatchewan group

Ostomy Canada Society group

Ostomy Canada Parents' group

Young Ostomates support YOS+FG



Ostomy Saskatchewan Membership and Donations/Bequests

Membership is open to all persons interested in supporting people living with an ostomy and their circles of support. As a member supporter you can enjoy the benefits of being part of Ostomy Saskatchewan as well as Ostomy Canada. You'll receive newsletters, opportunities for webinars, a magazine and the support of people here and across the country. You will be supporting an organization that is striving to be the voice for people living with an ostomy in Canada.

A minimum \$30 "supporter" donation will give you all the benefits of membership. \$25 will go to Ostomy Canada and any amount above \$25 will be for Ostomy Saskatchewan, which allows us to continue to support our group with support and advocacy. No donation is too small or too big. You will receive a tax receipt for your entire donation. Memberships are for a calendar year so we will remind you it's time to renew late fall and early in the new year.

Your financial contribution supports many initiatives including the youth camp, an education fund for ostomy nurses, the visitor's program, educational seminars, outreach and training programs. We have regular get togethers and updates will be listed in the newsletter and/or on the website (<https://ostomysaskatchewan.ca>).

ONLINE, e-TRANSFER or CHEQUE - Income tax receipts will be issued for entire donation.

Cheque: Make your cheque out to Ostomy Canada Society Inc. *WRITE SASKATCHEWAN on the notation space at bottom of cheque.* MAIL TO: OSTOMY CANADA 5800 Ambler Dr., Suite 210 Mississauga, ON L4W 4J4 and email ostomysask@gmail.com with name, address, email and phone number.

Debit/Credit: Go to the DONATE NOW page on the Ostomy Canada website. Fill in the details. Choose "Saskatchewan" under "Fund Area". Mark yourself as a "Supporter". <https://www.ostomycanada.ca/donation/>

E-transfer: Be sure to state Saskatchewan in the comments section. etransfer@ostomycanada.ca and email ostomysask@gmail.com with name, address, email and phone number.

PRODUCTS MENTIONED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY ENDORSED BY THE SASKATCHEWAN & DISTRICT OSTOMY CHAPTER. SEE YOUR DOCTOR FIRST BEFORE TAKING ANY OF THEM!

Colorectal Cancer Canada is the nation's non-profit colorectal cancer patient organization. They are dedicated to colorectal cancer awareness and education, supporting patients and caregivers, and advocating on their behalf. Their goal is to reduce the incidence and mortality of colorectal cancer in Canada and to improve the quality of life for patients, their families and caregivers.

Email: info@colorectalcancercanada.com Website: <https://www.colorectalcancercanada.com>



- Why are ghosts so bad at lying? Because you can see right through them.
- What's a ghouls favorite drink? Anything with boos.
- What kind of makeup do witches wear? Mas-scara-a!

