Tony Marshall

Kicking Kidney Cancer

da Vinci Xi Surgeon Console

BACK ON TRACK AFTER ROBOTIC SURGERY

What do you call a 70-year-old man with an ileostomy who runs and cycles hundreds of miles a week?

"A crazy athlete, that's me," says Tony Marshall, a veteran world and national champion triathlete from Carlsbad. "I admit it. I really like to compete."

As any athlete knows, it's important to take care of your body. So, Tony was adamant about getting his annual physical exams, especially with his medical history.

During Tony's exam last fall, his physician noticed a spike in his creatinine level (a high serum creatinine level usually means that the kidneys aren't functioning properly) and recommended that Tony see a urologist. Tests revealed a golf ball-sized tumor on his kidney. He was diagnosed with stage 3 kidney cancer.

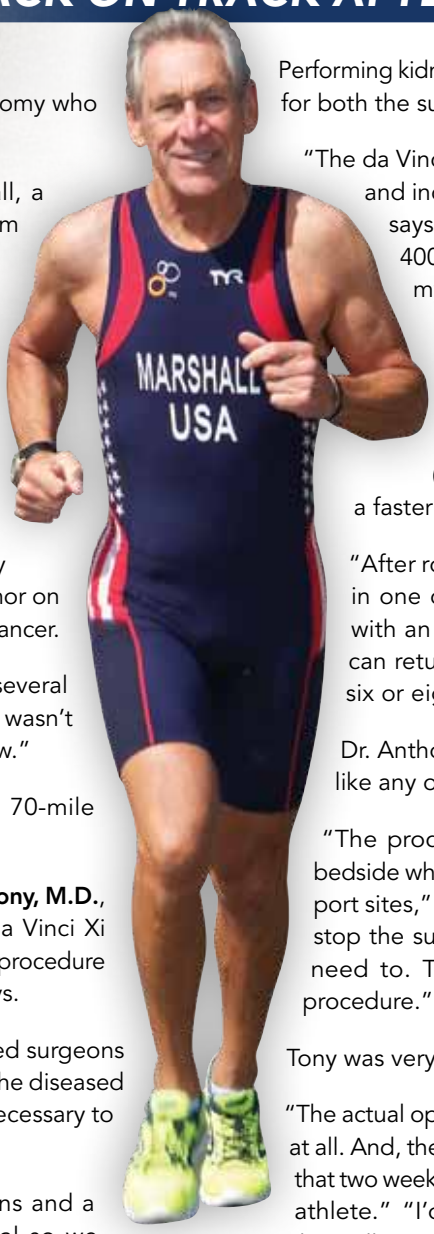
"My colon had been removed 40 years ago after several years of fighting ulcerated colitis," Tony says. "I wasn't going to let the removal of a kidney stop me now."

The day before his surgery, Tony completed a 70-mile bike ride.

Palomar Health Urologist **Julian Anthony, M.D.**, removed Tony's kidney using the da Vinci Xi robotic surgical system, "to keep the procedure minimally invasive," Dr. Anthony says.

Although robotic surgery has enabled surgeons to perform partial nephrectomies, removing only the diseased part of the kidney, Tony's complications made it necessary to remove the entire kidney.

"With his past medical history, he had adhesions and a lot of scar tissue and the kidney was abnormal so we needed to remove it," Dr. Anthony explains. "If I had just done the surgery laparoscopically, without the robot, I wouldn't have had the visual acuity that I needed."



Performing kidney surgeries robotically offers many advantages for both the surgeon and patient.

"The da Vinci Xi gives the surgeon enhanced visualization and increased manual dexterity for more precision," says Dr. Anthony, who has performed more than 400 robotic kidney surgeries. "I always approach my surgeries robotically, if possible."

For the patient, some of the benefits of robotic surgery include less blood loss because it's minimally invasive, a smaller scar, decreased risk of infection, less post-operative pain (which means fewer narcotics are needed) and a faster discharge from the hospital.

"After robotic surgery, a patient can usually go home in one or two days as opposed to four or five days with an open surgery," Dr. Anthony says. "And they can return to work in just two to four weeks, not the six or eight weeks that's required for open surgery."

Dr. Anthony describes robotic surgery as a "tool," just like any of the instruments used in surgery.

"The procedure is performed by the surgeon at the bedside who controls the robotic instruments through tiny port sites," he says. "Since I am in the room, I can always stop the surgery robotically and do an open surgery if I need to. The surgeon is in complete control of the procedure."

Tony was very impressed.

"The actual operation was a piece of cake. There was no pain at all. And, the recovery was pretty quick," Tony says, adding that two weeks after the surgery he was back to being a "crazy athlete." "I'd opt for always doing any kind of surgery robotically."