Case 40 A deformed finger



Figure 40.1

This young man has a characteristic deformity of the right index finger.

What is this deformity called?

A mallet finger.

How is it caused?

Either by avulsion of the extensor tendon of the finger at its insertion into the base of the terminal phalanx, or through a flake fracture at the posterior aspect of the base of this phalanx (Fig. 40.2, arrowed).

Which sport is linked to this injury?

Cricket. The hard ball, at speed, forcibly flexes the distal interphalangeal joint.

How may this condition be treated?

The finger is immobilized with the distal interphalangeal joint extended, using a mallet finger splint (Fig. 40.3). If there is a fracture of the base of the distal phalanx, this can be fixed by means of a pin.



Figure 40.2 X-ray of a mallet fracture.

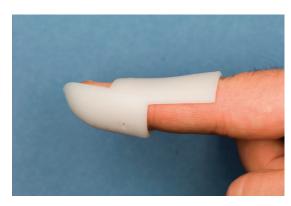


Figure 40.3 A mallet splint.