

## 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.