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IMAGING FUNDAMENTALS — DISTAL TARSAL JOINTS

Species: Equine

Breed: Quarter Horse

Sex: Gelding Age: 6 years

Clinical History:

Bilateral hindlimb lameness LH > RH

Questions to be answered:

Details of study and technical comments: A series of 8 radiographs of the tarsi including LM, DP, DMPLO and DMPLO views. The images are of diagnostic quality.

Diagnostic interpretation:

Left tarsus:

There is almost complete obliteration of the distal intertarsal (centrodistal) joint space with extensive subchondral bone lysis throughout the joint. There is marked sclerosis of the third and central tarsal bones with complete loss of the trabecular pattern. The lucent zone representing the region of the intertarsal ligament attachment is poorly visualised. With the exception of subchondral bone sclerosis of the third tarsal bone, the tarsometatarsal joint is largely unremarkable.

Right tarsus:

The distal intertarsal joint of the right tarsus has a very similar appearance to that described above for the left tarsus but slightly less extensive. The joint space is narrowed but visible dorsolaterally but completely obliterated medially. There is a large bridging osteophyte on the dorsolateral aspect of the joint. Subchondral bone lysis is present but less extensive and sclerosis of the third tarsal bone is less extensive than that seen in the left tarsus, some trabecular pattern is maintained. There is subtle remodelling of the tarsometatarsal joint.

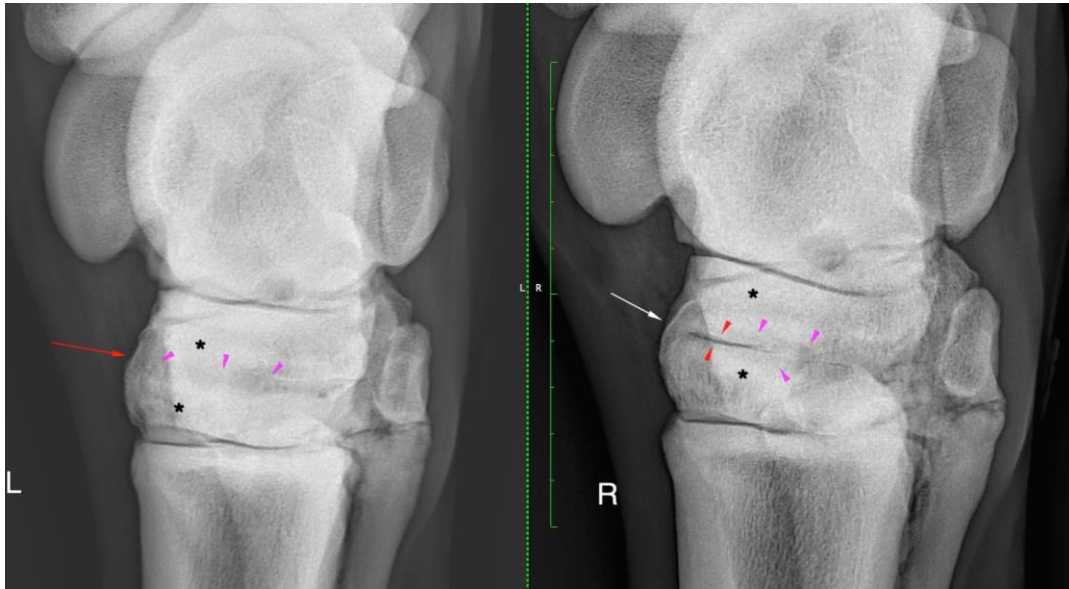


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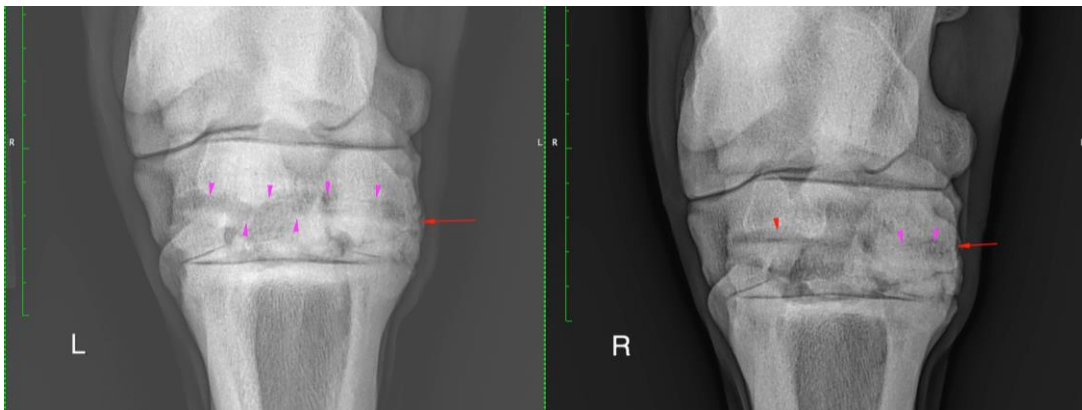
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DMPLO views of the left and right tarsi. The red arrow indicates complete obliteration of the distal intertarsal joint in the left the red arrow the bridging osteophyte in the right. The red arrowheads show some maintenance of the joint space in the right tarsus. The pink arrowheads indicate the diffuse subchondral bone lysis. The black asterisks show the sclerosis of the third and central tarsal bones.



DP views of the left and right tarsi. Lateral is to the right. The red arrows show obliteration of the medial aspect of the distal intertarsal joint space in both limbs. The red arrowhead indicates the visible joint space on the lateral aspect of the right tarsus. The pink arrows indicate the diffuse subchondral bone sclerosis of the distal intertarsal joint.

Conclusions:

- Bilateral, advanced distal intertarsal joint osteoarthritis. More extensive changes are noted in the left tarsus where there is almost complete obliteration of the joint.

Additional comments:

The distal intertarsal joint is in the process of ankylosis (fusion) in both hind limbs. This process is less complete in the right hind, more advanced in the left. Subchondral bone pain - whilst the process is ongoing - is the likely cause of persistent lameness.



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