

Ooh — bet that hurt

The mark, especially the “high mark” and “spectacular grab”, distinguishes Australian Rules football from more earthbound varieties.¹ Photographs taken at a recent South Australian National Football League match revealed a high mark where hyperextension of the proximal interphalangeal joint of the right index finger occurred. Interview with the player and examination of the affected digit 4 days after the match revealed no injury to the finger, although some bruising of the right thenar web space and mild tenderness of the first metacarpophalangeal joint were evident.

A previous report concluded that virtually all pure hyperextension injuries of the proximal interphalangeal joint result in rupture of the distal end of the volar plate,² but fracture dislocation appears to depend on joint angle at the time of injury.³ A review of published literature and photographic libraries failed to reveal a similar incident. Further research is required to characterise the biomechanical forces necessary to cause digital injury in sports requiring barehanded capture of a travelling ball.

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1 Hutchinson G. Football takes to the sky. In: Ross J, Hutchinson G, editors. 100 years of Australian football 1897–1996. Melbourne: Penguin Books, 1996: 28.

2 Bowers WH. The proximal interphalangeal joint volar plate. II: a clinical study of hyperextension injury. *J Hand Surg [Am]* 1981; 6: 77-81.

3 Akagi T, Hashizume H, Inoue H, et al. Computer simulation analysis of fracture dislocation of the proximal interphalangeal joint using the finite element method [abstract]. *Acta Med Okayama* 1994; 48: 263-270. □