

Clinical History

38 year-old man presented with left thumb pain and swelling following an injury 10 days prior.

Clinical suspicion was for ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) injury and the patient was referred for a radiograph as part of the initial assessment.





Figure 1: Radiograph of the left thumb reveals an avulsion fracture at the ulnar base of the 1st proximal phalanx (arrow).

Subsequent request was made for an ultrasound (US) to evaluate the integrity of the UCL.

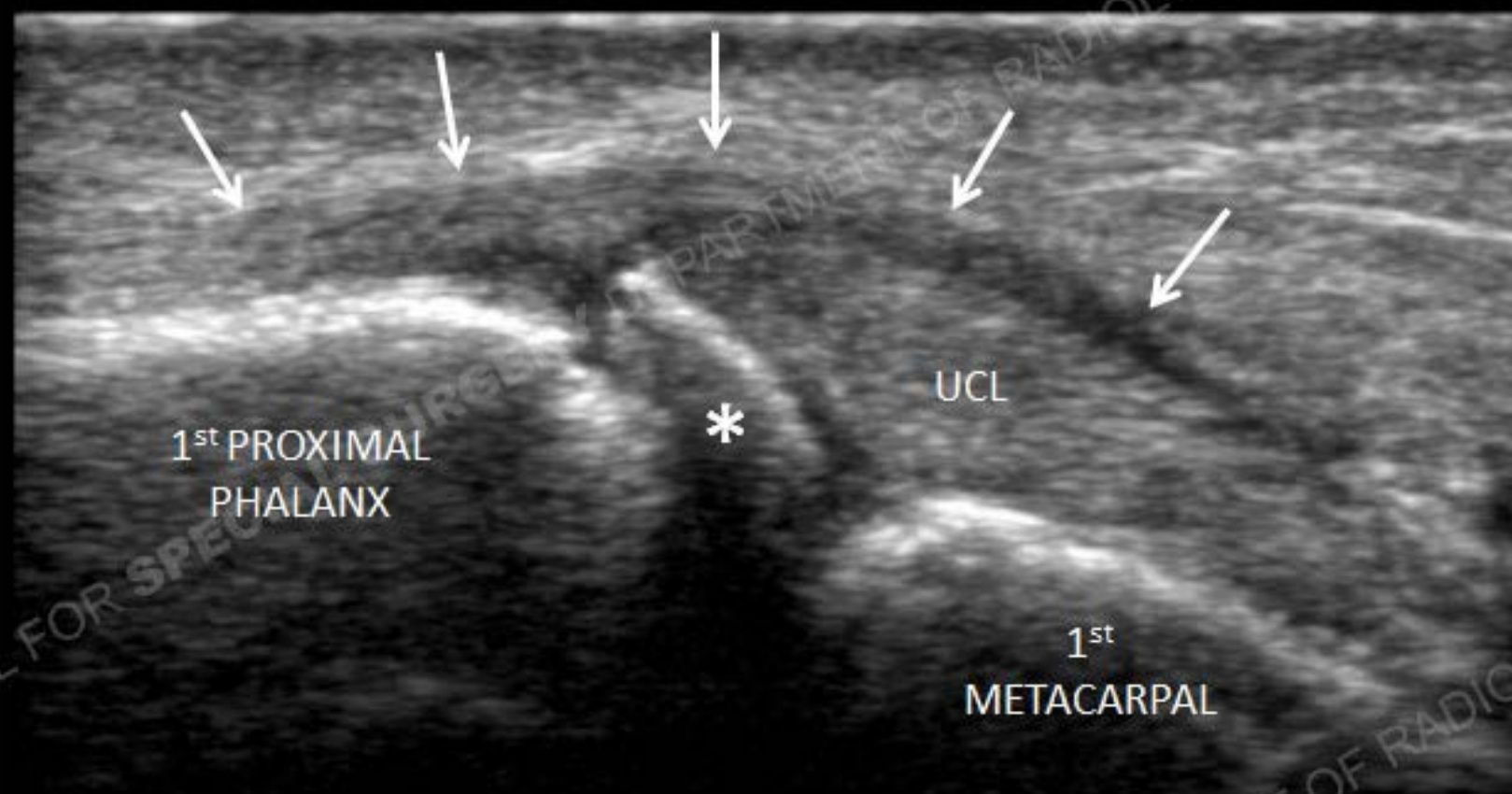


Figure 2: US at the first MCP joint. The avulsion fracture is well seen at the base of the first proximal phalanx (*). The UCL is clearly visualized, still attached to the avulsion fragment. The intact overlying adductor aponeurosis is also nicely demonstrated (arrows).

Diagnosis: Gamekeeper's thumb

- Intact UCL attached to proximal phalanx avulsion fracture
- Intact adductor aponeurosis

Discussion

Gamekeeper's thumb (or skier's thumb) describes a UCL avulsion fracture or rupture, usually off the base of the first proximal phalanx.

These injuries at the ulnar aspect of the 1st MCP joint may lead to significant instability, at times requiring surgical intervention.

As the structures about the 1st MCP joint are superficial, ultrasound is a useful and efficient modality to assess for the integrity of ligamentous structures following trauma to the thumb.

