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Anterior ankle impingement

Osteophyte formation causing impingement in the anterior tibiotalar joint. Common among athletes who play on grass or turf, which is where the alternative name “footballers” ankle originated. Often associated with an osteochondral lesion of the talar dome.

What to ask in History

- Duration
- Pain – usually occurs with squatting and felt anteriorly. Constant pain suggests OCL
- Swelling – global ankle
- Previous injury – often minor, repetitive
- Stiffness – limited ability to squat
- Treatment – Physiotherapy, Analgesia

What to look for on Examination

- Ankle alignment – malalignment suggests degenerative ankle
- Swelling – usually global
- Squat – limited and painful anteriorly
- ROM – limited dorsiflexion, plantar flexion normal
- Pain – along anterior ankle joint line

What investigations to order

- Standing ankle Xrays – osteophytes seen on anterior tibia with “kissing” lesions on the talar neck
- MRI – if OCL is suspected

How to treat

- Activity modification
- NSAIDs
- Cortisone injections
- Shoewear modification – rocker-bottom sole

When to refer

- Intractable pain
- Limited activities

What the surgeon may do

- Arthroscopic debridement osteophytes
- Debridement/Microfracture of OCL