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“Nala”, Performance Dog - Plated Radius and Ulna (R & U) Fractures

Nala is a spayed female Australian Shepherd. She was presented to San Carlos Veterinary Hospital with a comminuted midshaft fracture of the right radius and a simple two-piece fracture of the right ulna of her forearm (Figures 1 & 2). The fracture occurred during an Agility Trial performance. Nala has been a very successful national performer.



Figure 1

Figure 2

Figures 1 & 2.

A lateral (left) and an anterior-posterior close-up view (right) of Nala's comminuted fracture of the right radius and simple fracture of the right ulna.

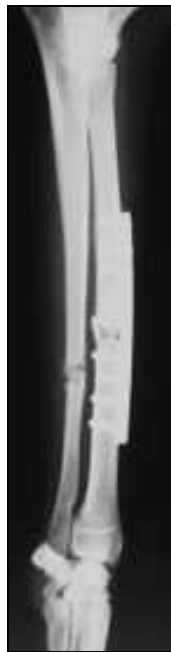


It was imperative that a stable form of fixation be utilized because of her athletic endeavors, so a plate and lag screws were chosen (Figures 3 & 4). The “butterfly” fragment of the radius was lagged to the main shaft of the radius with two 2.0mm cortical screws placed in lag fashion to create maximum holding power. These screws were “protected” with a 9-hole stainless steel “neutralization” plate (a plate that “neutralizes” the bending and torsional forces on the fracture and the lag screws. These metal implants will remain in Nala’s bone as long as there is no problem with loosening or infection.



Figures 3 & 4.

A lateral (left) and anterior-posterior (right) view of Nala's right foreleg immediately after the surgery. The neutralizing plate and screws used to secure the comminuted fracture of the radius can be seen.



Figures 5 & 6.

A lateral (left) and anterior-posterior (right) view of Nala's right foreleg two weeks after surgery.



Figure 7.

March 10, 2001. Lateral view of Nala's right foreleg. Arrows point to the united, almost healed fractures of the radius (left, with plate) and ulna.

Figures 3 & 4 show the fracture two weeks after surgery. All the screws are still tightly seated, there is early “fuzzy” activity at the fracture sites, suggesting normal healing activity at this point. Note that no metal implant was used for the ulnar fracture...it aligned itself when the radius fracture was aligned. The fewer metal implants we have to use, the lower the risk there is for infections or complications.

Figure 7 shows Nala's progress six weeks later. The fractures of both the radius and the ulna are nearly healed. And Holy Humerus, Batman! Less than three months after the injury, Nala was back competing in an agility trial (Figure 8). Why, Nala was so improved she was able to pen a letter to the SCVH staff, thanking them for the excellent treatment she received.



Figure 8. April 1, 2001. Back competing in agility trials.