Featured diagnosis: OCD: (Osteochondritis dissecans):
Osteochondrosis is defined as a disturbance of growing cartilage in joints. This area of affected cartilage may be followed by necrosis and fissures that extend deeper into the cartilage surface. When the lesion extends into the joint proper and causes inflammation, the condition may be referred to as “ostochondritis”. The term “ostochondritis dissecans” is used when a visible dissected flap of tissue is present. Most osteochondrosis lesions are diagnosed in horses less than 4 years old. Some lesions appear early, at 3 months of age, but disappear as the horse grows older.

Causes:  
a) Disruption of cartilage chondrocyte maturation  
b) Lack of capillaries (blood supply) to newly formed bone

Predilection sites:

- Stifle (lateral & medial femoral trochlear ridges)
- Patella (lateral facet)
- Hock (distal intermediate ridge & medial malleolus of tibia)  
  (lateral and medial trochlear ridges of talus)
- Shoulder (glenoid fossa & humeral head)
- Fetlocks (midsagittal ridge)  
  (condyles of 3rd metacarpal or metatarsal)

A range of conditions can result in OCD. Heritability (genetics) and interaction of environmental influences form a complex causation that may or may not cause significant disease. OCD is more likely to develop in large, fast-growing offspring of a particular stallion than in smaller siblings. Environmental influences can be nutritional (high energy) copper, calcium, phosphorus imbalances, excess exercise, trauma, or toxic causes.