Figure 2. IL-7 increases joint damage and inflammation in collagen-induced arthritis. Mice were injected with either PBS or IL-7. Radiographs of the ankle joints were taken at day 33. Radiological joint damage was graded for each ankle with a scoring index from 0-3. Representative radiographs show an unaffected control (non-arthritic) ankle joint, and space narrowing, variability in bone density, roughened bone surface in an arthritic ankle joint (arrows in A). IL-7 significantly increased radiological damage as compared to the PBS group (mean scores of 1.2 ± 0.1 vs 1.6 ± 0.2, respectively B). Consistent with the radiograph scores, histological examination of the ankles showed significantly increased severity of inflammation, bone and cartilage erosions, and periosteal exostosis with IL-7 treatment compared to PBS (C). Values are mean ± SEM of 15 mice per group (scores of two ankles per mouse were averaged) * , **, *** indicate statistical differences with PBS group of p<0.05 or p<0.01, and p<0.005 respectively.