

FIRST BASEMEN IN THE WORLD'S SERIES

Neither Hoblitzel Nor Luderus
Will "Star" Unless Pitchers
Become Careless.

In his first "dope" article upon the world's series of 1915 Fullerton explained his system of picking a winning team. "The basis of all 'dope' is comparison," he said. A perfect player would have 1,000 points. Cobb is rated at 922, Speaker at 903, and "dope" on inferior players comes from comparison with such near-perfect players, with deductions for differences in speed, hitting power, quick thinking, throwing, and base running. Then it is necessary to estimate the value of a player as a batter by studying his ability or inability to hit certain pitchers. After that the "dopester" figures how much the work of the catcher will affect the attack of the opposing team. When the value of a player as an individual is computed, his value as a part of a baseball machine must be reckoned. Then there is the relative value of position to be considered. Thus, in defensive play, a centre fielder is worth only 4.5 in 100, whereas a pitcher is worth 38 in 100. After studying conditions of fields, and guessing which pitchers the managers will use, the "dopester" computes the approximate score of each game.

First Basemen Compared.

By HUGH FULLERTON.

| | Value in Offense. | Value in Defense. | Value in Season. | Value in Series. |
|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Hoblitzel | 832 | 671 | 704 | 737 |
| Luderus | 861 | 618 | 717 | 710 |

There are few ball players in the country about whose ability there is as much question as there is about that of Dick Hoblitzel. From first baseman of the National League he retrograded until he was not considered good enough for the tail end Cincinnati club and every club in the National League, five of which needed first basemen, waived claim and he went to Boston. There he struck his old stride, and seemed as good a ball player as ever, although he has played by streaks—the greatest in the league for a time, and far off his work at another. That he has lost some of his sensational speed around first is undoubted, and his base running is not what he promised.

Hobby is a left-handed first sacker, handles the ball like a flash along the line, and makes the play down to second or across to third as handily as any one. That he is strong enough to hold the steady job with Del Gainor on the bench shows that Carrigan thinks he is going well and relieves us of the necessity of figuring Gainor in this series save as a pinch hitter or a capable understudy if Hoblitzel should be incapacitated in any way.

Luderus is more like the old type of first baseman than any other man now in the game. He is a big, heavy, flat-footed ball player, slow and a bit awkward in his movements and only a fair first baseman. His chief defensive strength lies in the fact that he is solid and steady and that he makes an excellent mark for the other infielders to throw at. He is a plodding, earnest worker, cool under all circumstances and just about as good a player, mechanically, in a world's series as he would be in an exhibition game. Luderus has been a normal .285-hitter ever since he broke into the National League in spite of his slowness. He is a terrific driver, and the fact that he plays on the Philadelphia grounds adds perhaps 15 points to his percentage because he hits hard toward right field. The majority of his long hits are over or against the right field stone wall. Batting against Hooper and Speaker will cut down his chance on the long Boston field, but the short wall at Philadelphia will help him and handicap them.

This season Luderus is rapping the onion to the tune of about .340 and keeping right on. He is helped by the fact that the pitching in the National League has been worse this season than it has been in a long time. To see how he is likely to bat against Wood, Shore, Leonard, Ruth, and Foster, I looked over his batting against ten National League pitchers who are similar to them in style. Against these ten (which included Toney of Cincinnati, Ragan, and Nehf of Boston, Pfeffer, and Tesreau) I discovered that his average against these ten was .238—a rather remarkable difference. The indication is that Luderus is not likely to be so formidable in the world's series as one might think from the bare averages.

Neither Hobby nor Luderus has been hitting the left-handers very well. Studying Hobby's figures against five American League pitchers, including Johnson, Scott, and Caldwell, I find his batting average must also be reduced considerably when he faces Alexander, Chalmers and Rixey, who will beyond doubt carry the burden for Moran.

Neither man is a good base runner, Hobby having some advantage in that regard. He gains in speed taking two bases, going faster from second to third than from first to second.

Indeed, in studying these figures, it will strike you as rather remarkable that the pennant winning teams in the two leagues, who are about to step out and battle for the world's championship, are about the poorest base running aggregation in either league, and their first basemen are fair representatives of the teams.

Luderus is a quiet, phlegmatic and unemotional fellow with considerably more brains than the fans may give him credit for possessing, when they judge from his deliberate movements and lack of enthusiasm. The pitchers tell me that he is deceiving in this; that he looks easy to fool, but is just as likely to be fooling the pitcher, for after he has looked bad swinging at one ball he may kick the cover loose from the next one of that kind. He has one bad weakness as a batter and the Boston pitchers undoubtedly know what it is and will try to pitch to it. If they have good control, they can stop him.

Hoblitzel is a different type. He is quiet and undemonstrative, but he has shown symptoms of temperament. He goes into the dumps when things break badly. His failure at Cincinnati was due largely to an attack of grouch against men and conditions. It is not likely that he will have such an attack during the world's series, for he will go into it with high hopes and all keyed up. He is that way—either at one extreme or the other.

By the comparative figures Hoblitzel is the better ball player for this series and neither he nor his rival is likely to cut any great figure in the final results. The big chance for one of them to be a hero is for some Boston pitcher to get careless—and then watch the ball go over that right field wall in Philly.

The difference between these men is not sufficient to give either any decisive claim to superiority—and we must go to the second basemen to learn more.

Get out your pencils and dope them with me tomorrow.