

Series Opener Beautiful to Watch Until Hubbell Fell Apart in Sixth, Joe Says

By JOE WILLIAMS

Times Special Writer

NEW YORK, Oct. 7.—Speaking of the first game of the World Series, it was at once a great ball game and an awful pain in the neck. For five innings it was a beautiful pitcher's battle. And in this battle you had to take Carl Hubbell of the Giants over Lefty Gomez of the Yankees.

Not that Gomez was bad. Anything but. The point was Hubbell was as close to perfection as it is possible to be without being perfection itself.

The first man to face him, Frank Crosetti walked. The next man, Red Rolfe struck out. The third man, Joe DiMaggio, singled to left. The next two were reasonably easy outs.

From then on—up to the big sixth inning—Hubbell was as great a pitcher as ever appeared in any World Series. The next 14 men who faced him went down in order. Meantime the Giants had gotten to Gomez for three hits and one run. Considering one thing and another, no run ever looked bigger. And it was a run the Yankees deliberately gave the National League champions. That should have been the tip off.

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You Can't Figure Those Yankees

This particular situation developed in the fifth inning. It was the one troublesome inning Gomez had. Ripped off with a single to right, McCarthy followed with a hit through Lazzeri—a ground ball that the old timer, or rather the young Lazzeri, would have converted into an easy out. Runners were on first and third and none down. And up to now neither team had scored. In such circumstances percentage baseball says bring the infield in to stop the runner at the plate.

What did the Yankees do? They backed deep, to the green rim of the outfield. They said "we'll get two men on the next play, we'll give 'em a run, but we'll get out of this hole." Now it's always a gamble when you play back for a double-play—the guy always has the chance to hit the ball out of the park—but it's a good gamble. It's percentage baseball.

Mancuso was the next hitter and he hit into a double play. The run came over, and to repeat, it looked like a big, fat, juicy run at the time. But that was the only run that came over. It was now up to the slugging Yankees to go out and get some runs themselves. This they eventually did. They seemed to know they would. The confidence they had in themselves was superlative. It came close to being the feature of the ball game.

The Beginning of The End for Carl

Trailing by one run they went into the sixth inning. They were facing a pitcher who had completely handcuffed them. DiMaggio, the third man up in the first inning had reached first on a soft single—a hit he had delicately stroked over third base. So far as the Yankees were concerned the inbetween innings were a perfect blank. It was a case of three up and three down. That is until the sixth.

The first man up in the sixth was Gomez, a notoriously weak hitter. Hubbell lost him. He couldn't get the ball over and the pitcher walked.

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Few people realized it at the moment but that was the beginning of the end. Hubbell had begun to weaken. He had been under such strain from the start, throwing one screwball after another, he had nothing to fall back on. In a twirling his skill and stamina faded. After Gomez walked the next three men got singles. With the bases full DiMaggio hit to center field. Two men came in. To all practical intents and purposes this decided the ball game. Before the inning was over Hubbell was out and two other pitchers took charge of the futile crusade.

Giants' Infield Didn't Help Much

You will read today that spotty infield play contributed to Hubbell's departure. This is entirely correct. The Giants collapsed at a spot where they figured to be supremely strong—in the region of second base. They were never error, dropping the ball after Mancuso had caught Gomez of second. Later on, at a less critical moment, Whitehead, whose chief distinction as a big leaguer stems from his fielding skill, let a ball from Lazzeri's bat get away from him. These lapses were important easy outs.

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