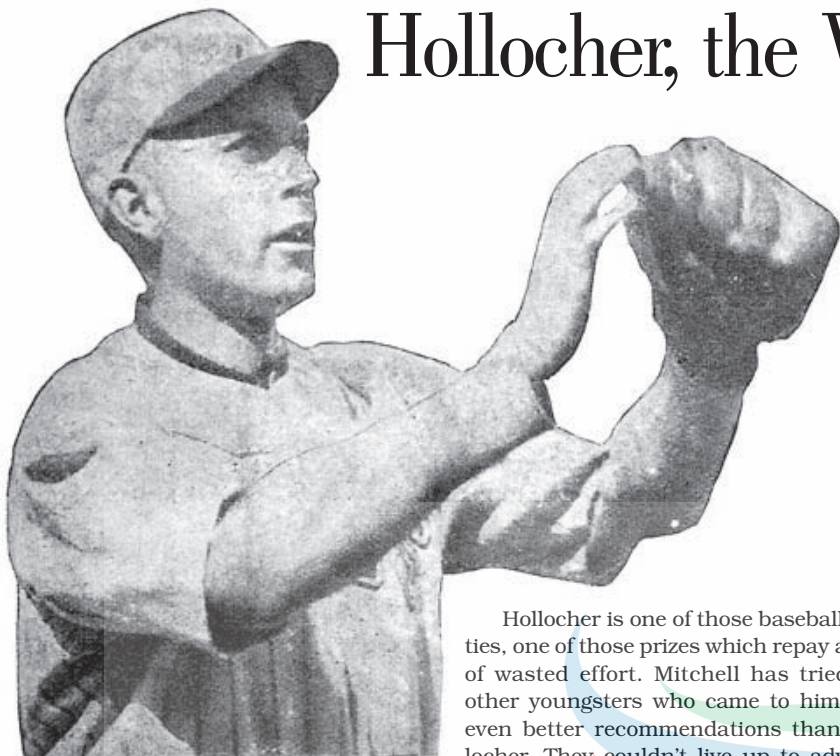


# Hollocher, the Wizard Shortstop

*How the Cubs Were Fortunate Enough to Secure the Most Sensational Young Infielder of the Season*

By JOHN J. WARD



Charles Hollocher in action

ON the eve of the 1917 world's series, Fred Mitchell was discussing the prospects of the Cubs. "It's the Giant's turn now, and I don't begrudge them their glory. But watch the Cubs next year, that's all I've got to say. I am not predicting any pennants either, I am merely saying to watch the Cubs. There are big things on foot. Our directors want a winning team and intend to have one. They are prepared to spend the money and I am confident of getting the results. You can gamble the club will be strong that represents Chicago next pennant race.

"While I wouldn't like to say anything about the men we are hoping to land in trades from other Major League clubs, there is a young fellow out on the coast who is coming to us as a short stop. I haven't seen him play, but I am told by competent authorities that he is a wizard. Of course, I discount a lot of the press-agent stuff I hear about young phenoms, but if this bird is one half as good as he is painted, he will be just the man we want for our short field position. His name? Oh yes, I believe Hollocher is the way he spells it."

A manager's disappointments are many, and he early learns to take his failures in a philosophic mood. Most of the youngsters who come to him highly recommended are unable to deliver. But he goes right on trying them out, just the same. For he realizes that the only way to uncover a real find is to try out and discard a dozen players whose surface indications are good, but who for one reason or another won't do.

Hollocher is one of those baseball rarities, one of those prizes which repay a deal of wasted effort. Mitchell has tried out other youngsters who came to him with even better recommendations than Hollocher. They couldn't live up to advance notices. Hollocher on the contrary, has exceeded all conceivable expectations.

His wonderful skill as a fielder has made him one of the best defensive shortstops in the game. He has all the advantages of the youngster, speed, nimbleness, agility coupled with the finished poise and skill of the veteran. Merely as a fielder he would be a treasure to any ball club. But in addition to this the kid can hit. Yes indeed. He is one of those rare birds among shortstops, a genuine three-hundred hitter.

It is a far cry from the Chicago Cubs with their impressive traditions, to the local team of Keokuk, Iowa. If a man can star on a team which represents one of the half dozen lending metropolises of the whole world, he ought to be a whale with Keokuk. But two short years ago young Hollocher essayed to pay for his bed and bean sandwiches by throwing the baseball for the latter team and in 124 games hit for the meager average of .229. No, it was not his hitting which recommended him to the notice of larger circuits. But even then he was a stellar fielder, so in the following season he journeyed to the Pacific coast and strove to stop the gap at short field for the Portland club. Hollocher did not shine on the banks of the Pacific. He was permitted to demonstrate his abilities in but 14 games

largely as a pinch hitter. And his batting average was of true pinch hitter proportions, namely .190. Portland decided that his greatness was rather a thing of the future than the present, so they permitted another club to secure his services, namely Rock Island, of the Three I League.

At Rock Island Hollocher took a new lease of life, played creditable ball for 124 games and smote the onion for an average of .289.

Portland, in burning the midnight oil over the dope sheets, came to the conclusion that they had "perpetrated an improfundity" in allowing Hollocher to go to the east so they recalled him, and saw to it that he earned his salary by participating in a round 200 games. This was a good season for our youthful hero. He appeared at bat an incredible number of times, namely 813, and made 224 hits for an average of .276.

We have already noted how Chicago swallowed the glowing tributes penned at the youthful phenom and secured him for Weeghman, Wrigley, Armour and Co. And what Mr. Hollocher has done in the big show is already current history.

Hollocher, his first name is Charles, is a modest appearing American citizen of twenty-one summers. He was born, and still resides, in St. Louis or more properly, did reside in St. Louis, for he is in Class I A of the draft and expects shortly to report for military duty.

He played third base for his local High School team and at a very early age entered the ranks of the professional ball player. Incidentally, throughout his professorial career, he covered the difficult station of short stop.

"I have two brothers," says Hollocher, "who show all the signs of being good players. Both are younger than I, so haven't had a fair chance along this line.

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HOLLOCHER'S RECORD									
Year	Club	League	G.	A. B.	R.	H.	S. B.	Ave.	
1915	Keokuk	.. Cen. Assn.	124	433	45	99	21	.229	
1916	Portland	. Pac. Coast	14	21	1	4	..	.190	
	Rock Is	... I. I. I.	89	356	40	103	11	.289	
1917	Portland	. Pac. Coast	200	813	135	224	33	.276	



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### THE WIZARD SHORTSTOP

*(Continued from Page 456)*

One of them did play professional ball for a short while, but the club to which he belonged disbanded, so he enlisted in the Marines and is now in Paris Island.

I expect to go into the army shortly and will be content if they only let me finish out this season. It is quite a send-off to a young fellow to get on a pennant winning club the very first season out, and I surely want to be in at the finish. After that I am reconciled to whatever happens. I rather look forward to life in the army. It's a great life, so my brother writes and I believe I will like it. Anyway, it's the thing right now, so I might as well make up my mind to like it."

Hollocher's minor league experience is one more illustration of the difficulties of picking them from the bush. No doubt his extreme youth had something to do with the fact that his record has shown a pretty steady advance in class. But it is odd, nevertheless, that his batting in the Major leagues should really have been better than it was in the minors. Wherein he resembles Zach Wheat, who couldn't hit .300 in the sticks, but became a fearsome swatter in the big show.

Nine men represent a club on the ball field. But if the Cubs win the pennant, as seems now assured, they will owe more than one-ninth of their success to Mr. Charles Hollocher, late of St. Louis and the Pacific Coast.

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