

## Lochner tosses shutout for his grandpa

Written by Jim Ecker

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Senior Night had special meaning for Marion High School southpaw Levi Lochner on Wednesday with his grandfather in the stands for the first time this season.

Don Lochner has been battling medical issues, but he made it to the ballpark and saw his grandson toss a three-hit shutout as the Indians blanked Western Dubuque, 1-0, in the first game of a Wamac Conference doubleheader.

Western Dubuque won the nightcap, 3-2.

Lochner was happy to put on a good performance for his grandfather.

"He's been in and out of hospice and nursing homes and stuff, so it was nice to have him up here for a game," said Lochner. "He always likes watching the team and everybody. I know he was happy to get out here."

Lochner appreciates all the support he's received from his grandfather over the years.

"He and my grandma, every game since I was little, they were always sitting up there

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somewhere," he said. "They would make every game, no matter how far."

Lochner has enjoyed a brilliant senior campaign for Marion. He has a 7-1 record and microscopic 0.69 earned run average, having allowed only five earned runs in 51 innings. He has 64 strikeouts and opponents are hitting less than .100 against him.



Lochner, a three-year regular, has a 19-4 career mark with 147 strikeouts in 148.1 innings. He's always had a good curveball, but he's added more pop to his fastball this season and is hitting 80 mph on the radar gun now.

"Before this season, I actually started working out with Coach (Tom) Hauck in the weight room," he said. "Yeah, it's definitely increased (my velocity) from last year and my sophomore year. That's really helped."

Lochner does not overpower anyone with his fastball, but it fools batters who are looking for his big breaking ball. "Yeah," he said, "it creeps up on you."

Lochner has thrown two no-hitters this season, one against Benton Community and the other against Clear Creek Amana.

"The first one against Benton, I didn't even realize it," he said. "I was just more focused on beating the No.2 team in the state at the time. It kind of happened."

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