

2006 District...

Wrestling

Zucker takes two

Ross' Robert Zucker won both of his 275-pound matches Friday at the Division I district tournament at Toledo Waite. He will wrestle in today's semifinal round for a chance to qualify for next weekend's state tournament at the Schottenstein Center in Columbus.

Zucker topped Medina's Steve Humphreys, 9-5, in the opening round and followed with a fall over Cory Naro of Steele in 3:02. Zucker must win one of his next two matches to qualify for the state meet. He will wrestle Brecksville's Bryan Dobransky in the semifinals.

Jorge Perez (215) pinned Demecus Beach of Toledo Scott in the first round but was later pinned by St. Edward's Ben Rios. He will wrestle in the consolation bracket today.

Ross' Derek Flores (103), Devon Mezinger (119) and Brad Biehler (171) were all eliminated after losing two matches.

Zucker, Perez Columbus bound

By RYAN AUTULLO

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TOLEDO — In any area of athletics, it's very difficult to defeat a formidable opponent twice in as many days. On the other hand, revenge isn't exactly easy to come by, either.

But with their seasons and careers in the balance, Ross senior wrestlers Jorge Perez and Robert Zucker came through with monumental wins Saturday afternoon during the Division I district tournament at Toledo Waite to advance to this week's state meet at the Schottenstein Center in Columbus.

Perez topped Ben Rios of St. Edward, 3-1 in overtime, to finish third and Zucker fell 5-2 to Springfield's Chris Holland and finished fourth in the heavy-weight division.

St. Edward, on the strength of nine individual champions, won the team title with 313 points and finished the tournament with a sparkling 52-8 record.

The top four wrestlers in each weight class from four different districts qualified to the state

meet, which begins Thursday afternoon.

In the consolation semifinals, a round that decides who qualifies for state, Perez (215 pounds) wrestled arguably the best match of his career in dismantling Tim Robinson of Barber-ton, 10-1. The previous round Perez needed just 55 seconds to pin Whitmer's Jeremy Wright, avenging a narrow loss from last weekend's sectional tournament.

"He doesn't like losing and whenever he can avenge a loss, it's just another feather in his cap," said Ross coach Mike Mezinger.

Perez's win over Rios was also a form of revenge after Rios pinned Perez in Friday evening's quarterfinal round. On Saturday, though, Perez was consistently close to taking Rios down before finally doing so with 32 seconds remaining in overtime.

"I knew I could beat that kid yesterday when we wrestled, and I knew I had to prove a point," Perez said.

Zucker (38-8) punched his

ticket to the state tournament with a 6-2 decision over Medina's Steve Humphreys in a rematch of Friday's opening round bout won by Zucker, 9-5. Zucker (38-7) said he was nervous about wrestling Humphreys twice in such a short period of time, but he stayed within his offense and used a five-point throw in the third period for the biggest win of his career.

Zucker, who stands at 6-feet-7 and flirts with the 275-pound limit, was very raw a season ago and is probably one of the most improved wrestlers in the state this season. In the highly recognized Brakeman Report written in late January, Zucker, ranked No. 14, is listed as coming on "very strong."

"He had a winning record last year but nothing close to getting to districts, yet alone state," Mezinger said.

Perez and Zucker are Ross' first state qualifiers since 2003 and mark the first time the program has sent multiple wrestlers to state in a decade. They are also the first Little Giants to advance to state during Mezinger's two-year tenure.