

Iodice, Bongo go out in style at state finals

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WEST CALDWELL — They may not have earned championships, or even garnered a place on the medal stands but, chances are that both Ray Iodice and Joe Bongo will remember their trip to the state wrestling championships in Atlantic City for the rest of their lives.

The two James Caldwell High School seniors made their first trip to that March 7-9 event at Boardwalk Hall by each finishing second in the Region 4 tourney on Feb. 28.

"It was almost surreal," said Bongo of the experience.

Bongo was 0-2 at the finals while Iodice was 1-2.

Bongo, a 220-pound senior who finished at 27-12, lost to Chris Henchy, a senior from Absegami, 2-1, in overtime on an escape point in the first round on Friday night, prior to falling, 3-1, to Steven Hill, a senior from Parsippany Hills, in the first round of wrestlebacks on Saturday morning.

Iodice, a 152-pound 12th-grad-

er, fell to Region I third place finisher Luke Bohn, a junior from Jefferson, 18-3 (tech fall, 5:05) in the first round.

On Saturday morning, Iodice rebounded to beat Avery Di-Nardi, a freshman from Holy Cross High, 6-4, in a first round wrestleback matchup, prior to losing, 7-3, to Kittatinny senior Nick Romyns, 7-3, later that day. Those results closed Iodice's senior season at 30-6.

Bongo is headed for Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

"This (getting to Atlantic City) is something that I've worked toward since way before high school and all that blood, sweat and tears finally paid off and I couldn't be happier.

"As far as college goes, I'm not sure where I'm going to go, but I'll most likely play football instead of wrestling, just because, to tell you the truth, for me, football is easier than wrestling," said Iodice, who gained 1,320 yards as a running back for the 11-1 Chiefs during his senior season.