

# From Fan to Future Pro: A Student's Journey into Wellington's Wrestling Scene

For many students, hobbies are a way to unwind after school, but for Wellington High School's Tama, wrestling is more than just a pastime—it's his dream. Training to become a professional wrestler with Valiant Pro Wrestling, Tama's story is a reminder that with passion and persistence, you can turn childhood fascination into a real opportunity.

## A Childhood Obsession

Tama's love for wrestling began when his aunt, who managed an opportunity shop, gifted him a wrestling DVD. "It had all these colourful characters from the 80s, 90s, and early 2000s—Rey Mysterio, Dean Malenko, John Cena," he recalls. "Ever since then, I've just been bloody addicted to it."

When he was six, Tama's obsession deepened with the arrival of his first wrestling action figures. "John Cena, Seth Rollins, Kalisto, Sin Cara—I'd recreate matches at home," he says.



## Finding Wrestling in Wellington

Despite being a lifelong fan, Tama was unaware of Wellington's local wrestling scene until 2021. "I saw a poster for Valiant Pro Wrestling at Wellington High," he says. "I was like, whoa, no way they have wrestling in Wellington!"



The show was an eye-opener. "My stepdad took me along, and I had a blast," he smiles. The experience became a family affair, with Tama and his mum attending shows as far away as Auckland. "It's kind of our thing now," he adds.

## Stepping Into the Ring

A turning point came when Tama received an unexpected message at the gym. "I was being invited to a tryout with Valiant Pro Wrestling," he recalls. "A couple days later, I was sweating, almost passing out, The tryout was 8 hours—but I walked away being allowed back to train!"

Now training every Tuesday at the Valley Pro Wrestling Academy in Seaview, Tama's sessions are no joke. "Forty push-ups, 40 leg raises, 40 squats—and that's just the warm-up," he says. While he's not yet involved in matches, he's building his skills, both physically and mentally.

When asked if wrestling is fake, Tama laughs. "The only thing fake is the intention. You've got to get from A to B, but how you do it is between you and your opponent," he explains. "It's storytelling through athleticism—and you really do get banged up."

## **How to Get Involved**

For students keen to dive into the local wrestling scene, Tama's advice is simple: "Come along to an event. Buy tickets, get front row seats, scream for your favourite wrestlers." Valiant Pro Wrestling hosts shows every two weeks, and fans can find details on their Instagram and Facebook pages (@ValiantProWrestling).

"Even if you're not into wrestling, it's just great to come along and check it out," Tama encourages. "The community is really positive, whether you're a fan or want to get involved in training."



As for his own future, Tama has big dreams. "I want to go professional. One day, WWE," he says. "It's been my dream since forever—and now, I'm finally starting to get a foot in the door."