



Cage Fighting

NEWS 17 JUN 09 @ 10:00AM | BY POLLY SIMONS



10 June, 2009. Cage fighting at VT1 with Scott Walker (camo shorts) and Richie walsh (black shorts) (Photo by Danielle Butters)

They train six days a week learning to punch, kick and wrestle their way to victory. But whatever you do, don't call them Fight Club.

"I don't go around saying I'm a fighter because as soon as people hear it, they just want to have a go at me," said 25-year-old carpenter Scott Walker. "People just take it as an invitation, but there's much more to mixed martial arts than that."

Alongside fellow North Shore fighter Richard Walsh, Mr Walker of Chatswood won his first fight on his debut in the mixed martial arts (MMA) Super Middleweight division of the Elite Fight Night competition at Penrith RSL Club on May 29, competing against fighters from all over Sydney.

"I just love it, it's good fun," he said of the sport which pitches fighters against each other using a

wide variety of martial arts techniques from jujitsu, karate and judo to Muay Thai (Thai boxing), boxing and wrestling.

Often mistakenly referred to as 'cage fighting', fights take place in an [octagonal padded cage](#) to protect opponents from injury and prevent them from falling off the often-elevated fighting rings. "Most people don't realise it, but the cage is actually there for safety," he said.

Originally taking up boxing and muay thai as a form of self-defence, three years later Mr Walke trains six days a week at VT1 Gym in Chatswood as well as coordinating Muay Thai classes for children and teenagers alongside Mr Walsh and coach Liam Resnekov and teaching self-defence classes for women's charity organisations. "I did it so I could protect myself but I never ended up needing it," he said with a smile.

For Mr Walsh of Chatswood, 20, a third-year construction student at the University of NSW, it was a lifelong interest in wrestling that lead him to begin studying Jujitsu and Muay Thai when he finished school. "When I was younger I used to watch the Ultimate Fighting Championships and it was always the boxing or the wrestling guys that won," he said. "They were always the best."

Having won their fights, both he and Mr Walker now hope to gain a bit more experience locally before hopefully heading off overseas, either to the United States or to Japan, to try their luck internationally.

"But in MMA at least, the image of fighters as bullies couldn't be further from the truth," Mr Resnekov said. "Most of the world champion fighters are white-collar professionals and statistically, it's one of the safest sports around."

"The problem comes when some guy thinks he can just watch a video or go into a shed and punch things for five minutes and they're a fighter. But these guys train so hard, they eat right, they don't party, They know you've got to have a strategy. You can't go in there and just start throwing punches."