

# “I’m myself turned up to a thousand”: Raising the spotlight on a UK professional wrestler

By **danibacon** -



*Dark Fruits Daddy enters the ring (Image: Mark Kidsley)*

**Grant David Mitchell from Northampton is a Finance Clerk at a builder’s merchants, but by week’s end, the leather jacket goes on, the lights go up and he steps into the ring as the formidable Dark Fruits Daddy.**

Mitchell, 31, has been wrestling for over five years, balancing a full-time job as a finance clerk, meticulously reconciling accounts at a builder’s merchants, with moonlighting as professional wrestler Dark Fruits Daddy, at various wrestling shows across the midlands. “I love that I get to meet people, live out a childhood dream and travel the country feeling like an absolute rockstar,” he reveals.

Mitchell first became interested in the sport when he was young, watching wrestling TV shows whilst sat on his dad’s knee. “I loved it as a child”, he raved, “How it made me feel, how I believed it was real. That you have the good guys and the bad guys, it just felt like it was the coolest, the clothes, the music, the wrestling – all of it was so cool!”

But it wasn’t until Mitchell was in his twenties that he considered going into wrestling as a profession. While attending matches with a friend and later meeting his wrestling heroes at the pub, Mitchell found himself inspired. “I thought, ‘I could do this’. I

already knew people who were doing it, I knew their trainers, so that’s how I first got into becoming a wrestler,” he recalls.



*Dark Fruit’s Daddy performing a leg drop on an opponent in the ring (Image: Mark Kidsley)*

A wrestler’s name needs to pack a punch—it’s almost as vital as the wrestler’s skills—but for Mitchell, his persona was inspired by something as simple as a pint. “Part of the culture is that we would go to a show, then go to the pub afterwards and I’d always order a Strongbow Dark Fruits cider. Some guys at the pub started calling me ‘Dark Fruits Daddy’ and it stuck,” Mitchell explains.

Beyond the name, Mitchell’s Dark Fruits Daddy character is an embodiment of his own life experiences and joys. “I take a lot of inspiration from things I like, rock festivals, tv, films, Northampton and my dad was a biker, it’s kind of a mishmash,” he says, “[Dark Fruits Daddy] is very close to the person that I am, and I think that’s the best way to be because it’s believable, I’m not pretending to be something I’m not. I’m myself turned up to a thousand.”

During his wrestling career, Mitchell has gained the heavy weight title at his local wrestling promotion in Northampton, he was given a drinking championship called ‘Boozer Weight’ at wrestling promotion Kumite, and he won a title at charity show Sacrifice Pro Wrestling. “It really meant a lot as Sacrifice was one of the first places that I got to try and work out who I was in the crazy world of wrestling,” he says.

Looking ahead, Mitchell aspires to take his wrestling faction, ‘Hellbound’, forward with the intention to travel, “I love the aesthetic and the vibe we have, I love the reactions we get and I really hope we can take it further. That’s my biggest request and desire

for next year, that we can make this thing that we’ve built national, if not international as that would be even better.”

