

## Midfielder Hina Sugita arrives in Portland

Midfielder Hina Sugita arrived in Portland last week and by Saturday evening had logged her first 12 minutes as a member of Portland Thorns FC, entering a National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) preseason match against OL Reign in the 78th minute.

According to Thorns FC general manager Karina LeBlanc, "Hina is a player that the club has been pursuing for the last few years ... She is a young talent with international experience and a skillset that strengthens our roster."

Portland acquired the rights to the Japanese international through a transfer with Japanese club INAC Kobe Leonessa in exchange for allocation money. Following the transfer, Sugita was signed to a three-year contract with the Thorns. The transfer was announced on January 26, 2022.

Sugita is a member of the Japan Women's National Team and played in the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup as well as the delayed Tokyo 2020 Olympics, which were actually held during the summer of 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Sugita has earned 27 caps with the senior national team.

At the U-20 level, Sugita and Japan finished third at the 2016 U-20 Women's World Cup. During that tournament, Sugita played in all six matches and won the Golden Ball as the most valuable player of the tournament.

While participating at the U-17 level, Sugita played in the 2012 and 2014 U-17 Women's World Cups. The Japan U-17s won the championship in 2014 and Sugita scored five goals in five matches, earning the tournament's Golden Ball.

Sugita is not the first prominent Japanese player to travel to the U.S. to play in the NWSL. Nahomi "Naho" Kawasumi had that honor when she joined Seattle Reign FC (now OL Reign) in 2014. Naho played several seasons with the Reign and INAC Kobe Leonessa before joining the NWSL's Sky Blue FC in 2019, which later became NJ/NY Gotham FC.

Other Japanese National Team players with NWSL experience include Yuki Nagasato, who was part of the Chicago Red Stars from 2017 to 2020 before playing with Racing Louisville during the 2021 season. Nagasato has returned to the Chicago Red Stars for 2022. Midfielder Rumi Utsugi played for the Reign from 2016 to 2019 before returning to Japan. Kumi Yokoyama and Saori Takarada also had joined the Washington Spirit in 2020 and 2021, respectively.

Sugita's contract has her playing in Portland for three

## Bill Tuiloma signs four-year contract extension with the Portland Timbers

The Portland Timbers and defender Bill Tuiloma have signed a four-year contract extension with a club option year. Tuiloma, who turns 27 on March 27, is entering his sixth season with the Timbers.

The Timbers acquired Tuiloma on July 26, 2017. He had previously played for French club Olympique de Marseille II after kicking off his professional career in 2011 at age 16 with New Zealand club Waitakere United.

The New Zealand international has started in 58 of 79 appearances for Portland, scoring four goals and tallying three assists. In international play, Tuiloma has scored one goal in 27 appearances with the New Zealand Men's National Team.

Upcoming Major League Soccer regular-season home games for the Timbers at Providence Park take place March 12 at 7:00pm against Austin FC, March 27 at 1:00pm versus Orlando City FC, and April 3 at 1:30pm against the LA Galaxy.

To learn more, or to buy tickets, visit <[www.timbers.com](http://www.timbers.com)>.



**SKILLFUL SUGITA.** Hina Sugita of Japan challenges for the ball during an international friendly soccer match held in Kameoka, Kyoto prefecture, Japan, in this July 14, 2021 file photo. Sugita arrived in Portland last week and by Saturday evening had logged her first 12 minutes as a member of Portland Thorns FC. Preseason matches for the club are scheduled at Providence Park on March 8 and 11. The National Women's Soccer League season will officially begin with the Challenge Cup, with games held in Portland on March 30, April 2, and April 17. (Kyodo News via AP, File)

years and she will wear jersey #8 for the Thorns. Thorns FC head coach Rhian Wilkinson said of her new midfielder: "Hina is a playmaker with the ability to play across multiple positions ... she plays with bravery on the ball always looking for opportunities to be dangerous."

Two preseason matches remain for the club and both are scheduled to take place at Providence Park. On Tuesday, March 8, the Thorns meet the U.S. U-23 Youth Women's National Team. On Friday, March 11, the club takes on the Chicago Red Stars. Both games kick off at 7:30pm.

The National Women's Soccer League season will officially begin on March 18 with the Challenge Cup. Home games in Portland are scheduled for March 30 vs. Angel City FC, April 2 vs. OL Reign, and April 17 vs. San Diego Wave FC. Challenge Cup games are also televised on Paramount+. To learn more, or to buy tickets, visit <[www.thornsfsc.com](http://www.thornsfsc.com)>.



**CONTRACT EXTENSION.** Bill Tuiloma (right, #25) of the Portland Timbers is seen playing at Providence Park in the home opener of the 2022 Major League Soccer season against the New England Revolution. Tuiloma last month signed a four-year contract extension with a club option year. (AR Photo)

## Made-in-Japan manga goes global with Webtoon, Deadpool

By Yuri Kageyama  
The Associated Press

**T**OKYO — Deadpool, meet All Might. Perhaps nothing highlights how the world of manga, the comics and cartoons originating in Japan, has gone global better than that coming together of superheroes, American and Japanese.

In *Deadpool: Samurai*, Marvel's Deadpool gets help in his battle against evil from All Might, the muscular hero in *My Hero Academia*, a hit Japanese manga that's sold 65 million copies worldwide.

*Deadpool: Samurai*, published in Japanese last year, came out in English translation in late February. The Japanese *Deadpool: Samurai* was the best-selling Marvel comic last year, surpassing more than 1 million views online. It marks the first partnership between Marvel and Japanese comics publisher Shonen Jump.

Sanshiro Kasama, the author of *Deadpool: Samurai*, said he was thrilled to take on the job because he has always loved Marvel heroes and wanted more Japanese people to love Deadpool.

"I said, yes, yes, yes, yes! I really want to do it. It's unbelievable the guy who always wanted to create a manga like Deadpool really gets to do Deadpool. I was so excited," he told The Associated Press.

One challenge was that Marvel was protective of its characters and would often insist what he had Deadpool doing was out of character. In one scene, where he had Deadpool shooting someone, a gun had to be changed to a paint gun, said Kasama.

*Deadpool: Samurai* features drawings by Hikaru Uesugi, Kasama's collaborator, but the scenes with All Might had drawings by its original manga artist Kohei Horikoshi. *Deadpool: Samurai* is the first collaboration between Marvel and U.S. manga publisher and anime distributor VIZ Media.

Manga has quickly become the top adult fiction category in the U.S. Sales in the graphic novel category — which includes manga and is exemplified by *My Hero Academia* — jumped 160% in 2021 on-year, growing 15 times faster than the total adult book market, according to The NPD Group, which tracks such trends.

Japan still makes up the world's biggest manga market at 45% in 2020, but the rest of the global market combined is quickly catching up, according to Grand View Research, a researcher and consultant based in San Francisco. The global manga market, valued at \$23.5 billion in 2020, is expected to balloon to \$48 billion in 2028, it said.

Julia Mechler, creator of the manga *Hymn of the Teada*, found that an American publisher was more interested in her work, which stars a woman from Okinawa, than were Japanese publishers, who saw it as niche and political.

Mechler wants her works to give a voice to Okinawa, a southwestern Japanese island where a gruesome land battle was fought in the closing years of World War II.

"I thought the beauty of Okinawa is that they really value peace," said Mechler, whose mother is Okinawan and her father American.

"I was educated that peace is the most important thing in the world. Peace and life. And that sounds like a cliché, but, looking at the world, that's actually really difficult to achieve."

Mechler believes the boundaries between Japanese manga and works by non-Japanese are blurring, with the world of manga increasingly going global.

Japanese animation, known as anime, is popular on Netflix. Shows like "Demon Slayer" and "Attack on Titan" were first published as manga. Netflix is promising more anime this year, as are other streaming services like Hulu and Disney+.

Manga is also behind hit Netflix series that star human actors like "Fishbowl Wives," which focuses on marital infidelity in a middle-class Tokyo neighborhood. Such shows are drawing not only Japanese but also American and other global viewers.

Another hit Netflix show, "All of Us Are Dead," in which zombies overrun a high school, is based on a Webtoon, a form of manga that started in South Korea.

Although manga has long been available online through Kindle, Apple Books, Google Play, and other platforms, Webtoon caters its products for cellphone reading by rearranging the boxes to line up vertically, allowing readers to scroll from panel to panel with a flip of the finger.


When manga is read on paper pages, the story moves across from one box image to the other. Some Japanese manga fans still prefer reading the old way, even online, but newcomers appear to be rapidly adapting to enjoying manga Webtoon-style.

Webtoon Worldwide Service, which includes Naver  
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**If I have a positive COVID-19 test, could it just be the flu?**

**A positive COVID-19 test result only tells you that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is present.**

There are certain tests that are designed to detect both viruses, but they wouldn't give a positive COVID-19 test result if only the influenza (flu) virus were present.



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