

Bell Media's Hockey Romance Series 'Heated Rivalry' Sells to HBO Max in the U.S. and Australia (EXCLUSIVE)

The buzzy show, which premieres Nov. 28, has also been acquired by Movistar Plus+ in Spain and Sky in New Zealand

By Ellise Shafer



Bell Media

"Heated Rivalry," an upcoming Canadian hockey romance series from Bell Media, has scored a slew of international sales ahead of its Nov. 28 premiere on streamer Crave.

Sphere Abacus has sold the six-episode Crave Original show to HBO Max in the U.S. and Australia, where it will also premiere on Nov. 28, as well as to Sky in New Zealand for a Nov. 30 debut and Movistar Plus+ in Spain, with a release date to be announced.

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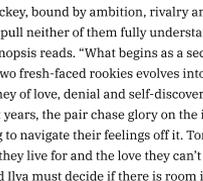
Created by "Letterkenny" writer-director-producer Jacob Tierney and based on Rachel Reid's bestselling book series "Game Changers," "Heated Rivalry" tells the love story of rival hockey players Shane Hollander (Hudson Williams) and Ilya Rozanov (Connor Storrie). The cast also includes François Arnaud, Robbie G.K., Christina Chang, Dylan Walsh, Sophie Nélisse and Ksenia Daniela Kharlamova.



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"Shane and Ilya are two of the biggest stars in major league hockey, bound by ambition, rivalry and a magnetic pull neither of them fully understands," the show's synopsis reads. "What begins as a secret fling between two fresh-faced rookies evolves into a years-long journey of love, denial and self-discovery. Over the next eight years, the pair chase glory on the ice while struggling to navigate their feelings off it. Torn between the sport they live for and the love they can't ignore, Shane and Ilya must decide if there is room in their fiercely competitive world for something as fragile and as powerful as real love."

The international sales of "Heated Rivalry" follow Bell Media's acquisition of a majority stake in Sphere Abacus earlier this year, positioning it as the primary international distributor of Bell Media's distribution rights.



"Heated Rivalry" is premium, high-caliber content that resonates with global audiences," said Justin Stockman, vice president of content development and programming at Bell Media. "These international sales are a testament to Accent Aigu Entertainment's vision for Rachel Reid's story and underscore the strength of our partnership with Sphere Abacus, and our shared commitment to bringing compelling, buzzworthy content to viewers worldwide."



Added Jonathan Ford, managing director of Sphere Abacus: "With strong performances from its lead actors, 'Heated Rivalry' delivers a powerful and unique narrative which our clients in all parts of the world are keen to share with their viewers. We're very excited about additional international sales prospects for this engaging series in the weeks to come."

Bell Media president Sean Cohan said the company's ambition has long been to "create exceptional content that travels globally," and "Heated Rivalry's" sales are "another validation of that vision."

He continued, "Jonathan Ford and the team at Sphere Abacus have been great partners in this journey, helping us bring our series to engaged audiences around the world... we are just getting started."

"Heated Rivalry" is produced by Accent Aigu Entertainment in association with Bell Media's Crave. Tierney serves as writer, director, producer and executive producer. Brendan Brady is producer and executive producer. Lori Fischburg is producer and Reid is consulting producer. For Bell Media, Alison Korogyi is senior production executive, original programming; Sarah Fowle is head of production, original programming; Adam Feigen is development executive, scripted original programming; Rachel Goldstein-Couto is head of development, original programming; Brian Blazik is head of Bell Media sales, Sphere Abacus; Carlyn Klebuc is general manager, original programming; and Stockman is vice president, content development and programming.

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That show was about family values and that family stuck together and they looked after each other.