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TV

'Heated Rivalry' Stars Surprise Fans at Hi Tops Trivia Night in West Hollywood and Share Message for LGBTQ+ Youth

"Believe in yourself, be yourself, and just f***ing schwing it — and bang it, and fling it in every direction. Don't let anyone shut you up or shut you down."

Author: Andy Lalwani | December 10, 2025 10:10 Am PST 2 Min.

Photo: Rustonvance on x / Photo by Harold Feng/Getty Images

Fans at Hi Tops, a beloved LGBTQ+ bar and community hub on Santa Monica Boulevard, got an unexpected early holiday gift Tuesday night when *Heated Rivalry* stars Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie walked into the venue during its weekly trivia event.

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The pair, who play rivals-turned-lovers Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov on the breakout Canadian series, were greeted with cheers and applause as they entered the crowded bar. The surprise appearance quickly turned the festive trivia night into an unofficial fan meet-and-greet, complete with jokes, selfies and heartfelt messages from the actors.

"Thank you for watching our show," Williams told the audience shortly after arriving. Storrie followed with a line that sent the room into laughter: "Thank you for tweeting about our butts." The show has earned a reputation online for its intimate scenes, which have helped fuel the series' viral success.

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But the actors quickly shifted from playful banter to appreciation, acknowledging the strong support they've received from LGBTQ+ audiences since *Heated Rivalry* premiered. "It means a lot to have so many people in this community embrace us and love this show," Storrie said. "I think it's awesome."

Hudson Williams attends the premiere of "Heated Rivalry" at TIFF Lightbox on November 24, 2025 in Toronto, Ontario.

The night took an even more meaningful turn when Williams and Storrie asked which charity the trivia event was supporting. Hi Tops staff announced that the proceeds would benefit Rainbow Labs, an LGBTQ+ youth mentoring program based in Los Angeles. The bar later confirmed that more than $1,500 was raised during the event.

Connor Storrie as Ilya Rozanov and Hudson Williams as Shane Hollander in Episode 104 of Heated Rivalry. Photo: Sabrina Lantos © 2025

When asked if they had a message for queer youth, both actors offered words that resonated throughout the room.

Heated Rivalry. Photo: Bell Media

"Take up space, be yourself, be really loud, and don't take s**t from anyone," Storrie said, receiving cheers from patrons.

Williams added his own spirited advice: "Believe in yourself, be yourself, and just f***ing schwing it — and bang it, and fling it in every direction. Don't let anyone shut you up or shut you down." Storrie quickly clarified with a grin, "It — meaning your authenticity."

Hudson Williams as Shane Hollander, Sophie Nélisse as Rose Landry, Ksenia Daniela Kharlamova as Svetlana, and Connor Storrie as Ilya Rozanov in Episode 104 of Heated Rivalry. Photo: Sabrina Lantos © 2025

The appearance marks the latest moment in the growing cultural footprint of *Heated Rivalry*, which has become one of the most talked-about queer dramas of the year. Adapted from Rachel Reid's *Game Changers* novels, the series centers on Rozanov and Hollander, two professional hockey players whose rivalry masks a secret, passionate relationship.

Heated Rivalry. Photo: Bell Media

The show has also expanded its universe to include a fan-favorite episode inspired by Reid's first book, *Game Changer*, highlighting the romance between hockey player Scott Hunter (François Arnaud) and barista Kip Grady (Robbie G.K.).

Heated Rivalry

As for Williams and Storrie, their West Hollywood drop-in proved they're not just stars of a hit series, they're eager participants in the community that helped turn *Heated Rivalry* into a phenomenon.

TAGS CONNOR STORRIE HEATED RIVALRY HUDSON WILLIAMS

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