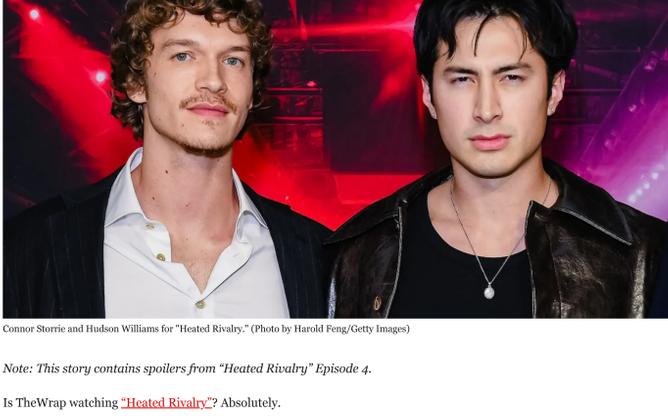


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‘Heated Rivalry’ Stars Tease What to Expect From Final 2 Episodes: ‘We Kind of Had a Disagreement About This’

Connor Storrle and Hudson Williams tell TheWrap all about their breakout *Crave*/HBO Max gay hockey drama

 JD Knapp December 11, 2025 @ 10:00 PM [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [e](#)



Connor Storrle and Hudson Williams for "Heated Rivalry." (Photo by Harold Feng/Getty Images)

Note: This story contains spoilers from "Heated Rivalry" Episode 4.

Is TheWrap watching "Heated Rivalry"? Absolutely.

The gay hockey romance drama from *Crave* and HBO Max just aired its fourth episode, teeing up two final installments that are sure to have fans on [the edge of their seats](#). In the interim, stars Hudson Williams and Connor Storrle opened up about their undeniable chemistry, adapting the "Game Changer" books and even impacting the sport itself.

"I just feel so blessed with how nice everyone's been. As we all know, the Internet can be pretty frickin' ruthless. For every weird, negative comment, I feel like there's literally thousands of positive, fun ones. It's also just — not only it being meaningful is really awesome, but also people having fun with it is so cool," Storrle told TheWrap of the positive reception. "Sometimes we get so lost in the art that we forget about entertainment, so I'm also just happy that people are having fun, reacting to it, making funny videos online about it, joking about it. There's a sense of fun with it and not just, you know, the art or the importance."

"It's all been so nice that I think everyone feels Canadian," Williams agreed.

The duo stars as pro hockey players Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov in Jacob Tierney's adaptation of Rachel Reid's novels. The outcome is a strikingly sexy, yet surprisingly sweet, examination of sexuality in professional sports. So how exactly did the actors land on their enemies-to-lovers, will they/won't they dynamic?

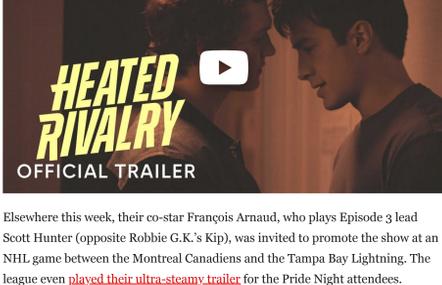
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"In the character, I have a seriousness that I don't have in real life, but we always felt like we were doing a show that had weight and depth," Williams explained. "Obviously there's fun and there's revelry, there's a sort of celebration that's in the book and the show itself too, but it felt like in those moments we're kind of in a little level of despair and yearning that's uncomfortable. I don't feel like we shied away from the depth of the reality of what these characters will be going through."

Episode 4 saw Shane and Ilya break off their secret affair, but despite Shane finding a new partner in actress Rose Landry (Sophie Nélisse), the connection between the two players is still burning as bright as ever by the end of the eventful hour.

"I think it's all that in-between. Something like chemistry, you should be able to watch it in a foreign language or with the audio off and be able to get a sense of what's going on," Storrle said. "I think just our natural concoction together makes it so that when we're not speaking, there's thoughts, there's an internal life that's vivid and active and shared."



Elsewhere this week, their co-star François Arnaud, who plays Episode 3 lead Scott Hunter (opposite Robbie G.K.'s Kip), was invited to promote the show at an NHL game between the Montreal Canadiens and the Tampa Bay Lightning. The league even [played their ultra-steamy trailer](#) for the Pride Night attendees.

"To try to change an entire culture or a workplace, it takes a lot. Something that I realized was there's inevitably — even if it doesn't speak to someone in either coming out or changing their lifestyle or being more open or vulnerable — it's going to cross some minds that the things that people say and do around their players in this brotherhood has an effect," Storrle said of the show's real-world impact. "You really don't know what people have going on in their day to day, you really don't know what's going on behind closed doors unless you're a part of it. So even if it's just an extra sense of mindfulness, I think that's a huge success."

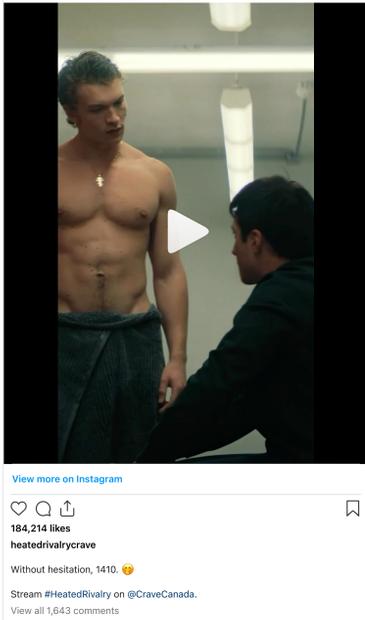
Looking ahead, however, the two stars admitted they have a difference in opinion over how faithfully the remaining episodes stick to the source material.

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"We kind of had a disagreement about this. From what I remember, we do the book through and through," Storrle shared, while Williams argued: "We do not."

"Jacob has told me, and then from memory, there is a slight departure. But I think it is very diligent and true to the writing ... pretty true," Williams continued, with Storrle ultimately noting, "There's no rug-pulls, we're not going to be pulling out rugs from under you. No, we're trying to honor the story."



As viewers are aware, that story consists of multiple love stories across multiple timelines. But who exactly is the titular rivalry referring to?

"They're pitted against each other as rivals, but I don't think that represents earnestly how they feel about each other or what that relationship actually means," Williams said. "But, obviously, they have an understanding of how the media is trying to sort of perceive them."

"It's like you trying to set us up against Scott and Kip, which we love," Storrle concluded. "This is the rivalry: You versus us is the rivalry."

Guilty as charged. "Heated Rivalry" releases new episodes Fridays on *Crave* and *HBO Max*.

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JD Knapp is the morning news editor at TheWrap, with a personal preference for horror movies, bubblegum pop, reality TV, sitcoms, and animation. After growing up in Connecticut and graduating from Emerson College in Boston with a degree in Broadcast Journalism, he has gone on to work for national outlets such as People, E! News,...

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