

Heated Rivalry’s hot hockey romance sparks conversations around inclusivity

The Cutting Edges, Vancouver’s only 2SLGBTQIA+ hockey team, says it’s been seeing more interest since the show’s release.



Eden Chipperfield / January 12, 2026



Heated Rivalry has viewers obsessed ever since the first season hit screens in November.

The *Crave*—original blockbuster hit depicts a captivating romance between two rival male hockey players that is full of steamy, but also sensitive, moments. However, alongside its entertainment value, it offers refreshing 2SLGBTQIA+ representation in professional sport.

“They aren’t necessarily stories of like queer people and LGBTQ plus people finding happiness and joy,” said Sam Jaffe, the board secretary of [The Cutting Edges](#), a queer hockey association in Vancouver that has four teams playing in two leagues.

“One of the watershed things about *Heated Rivalry* for us is that it’s not just a story about LGBTQ folks playing sports”, said show creator Jacob Tierney in a press release. “It’s about them finding joy in all of that, and I think that that’s a really important message that the show sends.”

He believes the queer community deserves a happy ending rather than the tragic endings usually portrayed.

“I wanted to bring *Heated Rivalry* to life and share its shameless, funny, epic, sexy, and intensely romantic journey with the world,” said Tierney.

However, the reality outside of the show has less representation. The NHL has faced controversy over queer representation on the ice.

In June 2023, the NHL **announced** that teams were no longer allowed to wear specialty jerseys during games, practices and warm-ups. The ban includes the use of rainbow-coloured stick tape.

The decision was **reversed** in October 2023, allowing pride tape to be used again during games and practices.

Jaffe says there have been “ups and downs” in The Cutting Edge’s relationship with the NHL, and that “global conservatism” is an ongoing challenge.

“We have been able to be part of all of their pride nights, and they have really highlighted us in a lot of ways, which is great,” said Jaffe.

“It does feel from just my teeny tiny individual perspective, that we are on the upswing.”

The Cutting Edges **formed** in 1993 for queer-identifying people to enjoy playing hockey regardless of experience. The association is home to the only 2SLGBTQIA+ hockey teams in Vancouver.

The association has four teams in the club, three play in the Adult Safe Hockey League and one that plays in the Adult Recreation Co-ed Hockey League.

The Cutting Edges hold free monthly community skates at the West End Community Centre. Skates are provided, and all are welcome out on the ice regardless of identity or orientation.

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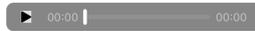
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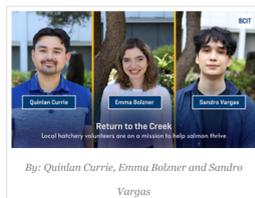
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