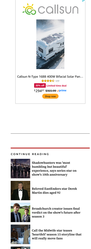

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HOME / TV AND FILM

Viewers binge-watching 'masterpiece' 6-part drama after landing new streaming home

The steamy six-part romance drama first hit screens across the pond in November, and has now amassed a huge following in the UK

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Abby Allen
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Published
JAN 5, 2026 AT 5:34 PM EST

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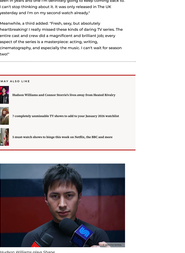
U.K. viewers have been binge-watching *Heated Rivalry* ever since the steamy six-part queer hockey drama landed on **Sky** and **NOW** on Saturday.

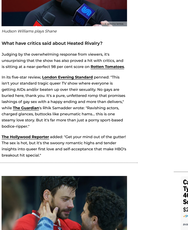
The show, which is also available to watch on HBO in the US, follows two rival hockey players, Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov, as their on-ice rivalry transforms into a years-long secret romance. Created by Jacob Tierney and released by Canadian streamer Crave, the show is based on Rachel Reid's bestselling 2019 book series.

The TV adaptation proved an **instant hit with audiences** across the pond when it premiered in November, quickly climbing the charts to become Crave's most-watched original series in history and securing a near-perfect score of 98 per cent on Rotten Tomatoes. It has also catapulted the show's two leads, **Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie**, into the spotlight, with the pair set to present an award at the Golden Globes on Sunday.

As a huge fan of the series and the books, it's really no surprise this show has found a whole new dedicated fanbase in the UK – and that's only set to grow with seasons two and three already greenlit. Intrigued? Keep reading to find out what viewers are saying about the hit show...

WATCH: Heated Rivalry Official Trailer





Connor Storrie plays Ilya

What are viewers saying about Heated Rivalry?

The series holds a 95 per cent audience rating on Rotten Tomatoes, with one viewer penning "This was a masterpiece in storytelling. The highs and lows were blended seamlessly together to create a beautiful budding romance that took my heart and abused it in the most amazing way. I was pulled in and glued to the screen. Absolutely beautiful story, beautiful acting, beautiful producing and directing. I can't recommend this enough it's a must see!"

A second person wrote: "Such a great series, honestly it's beautifully shot, cast and acted. It's just the best love story I've seen in years and one I'm definitely going to keep coming back to. I can't stop listening to the music, it's released in The UK yesterday so I'm obsessed with it and it's amazing."

Meanwhile, a third added: "Fresh, sexy but absolutely heartbreaking! I really missed these kinds of darling TV series. The entire cast and crew did a magnificent brilliant job, every aspect of the series is a masterpiece: acting, writing, cinematography, and especially the music. I can't wait for season two!"

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Hudson Williams plays Shane

What have critics said about Heated Rivalry?

Judging by the overwhelming response from viewers, it's unsurprising that the show has also proved a hit with critics, and is sitting at a near-perfect 98 per cent score on **Rotten Tomatoes**.

In its five-star review, **London Evening Standard** panned: "This isn't your standard tragic queer TV drama where everyone is getting AIDs and/or beaten up over their sexuality. No gays are buried here, thank you. It's a pure, unfettered romp that promises tastings of gay sex with a happy ending and more than delivers."

The Guardian wrote: "Heated Rivalry is a sometimes sweaty, charged gamble, bankrolls like pneumatic twins... (This is one, steamy love story. But it's far more than just a porty-sport-based bodice-ripper."

The Hollywood Reporter added: "Get your mind out of the gutter! The sex is hot, but it's the sweeping romantic highs and tender insights into queer first love and self-acceptance that make HBO's breakout hit special."

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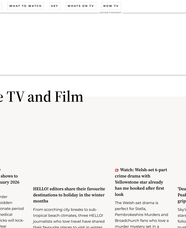


Francois Arnaud and Robbie Q.K.

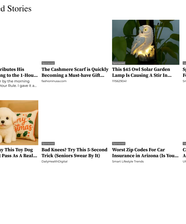
What is Heated Rivalry about?

According to Sky's official synopsis: "Heated Rivalry follows Asian-Canadian player Shane Hollander and Russian player Ilya Rozanov - two rising stars in Major League Hockey playing on teams with a long-standing rivalry.

"But their ambition to succeed in their careers and the hatred on the ice hides a secret romance between the pair when that started while they were rookies and they are desperate to keep under wraps.

"Starting in December 2008, Heated Rivalry tracks the eight years that follow their first meeting, as the pair find themselves on their own personal journeys as they become torn between their love of hockey and each other.

"With outside forces working against them - including the conservative Russian government, overbearing parental figures and the ultra-masculine world of ice hockey itself - can love prevail between them?"



Who stars in Heated Rivalry?

Hudson Williams (Alleyoop, Tracker) and Connor Storrie (Joker: Folie à Deux, April 4) lead as Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov, while François Arnaud (The Bungee, Yellowjackets) and Robbie Q.K. (Overcompensating, Utopia Falls) feature as episode three's couple Scott Hunter and Kip Grady.

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Other supporting cast members include Christina Chang (The Good Doctor, Unshaded as Yuna Hollander), Dylan Walsh (Big/Luck, Superman & Lois) as David Hollander, Sophie Nélisse (Yellowjackets, The End of Us) as Rose Landry and Kaniva Daniela Khachanova (Downsizing, Rose Hood) as Svetlana Metreva.

Rounding out the cast are Calan Peller (The Other Kingdom, Working Mama) as Hayden Pike, Nadine Bhattacharjee (One More Time) as Elena and Francis Lü (Fresh, Bad Blood, Chucky) as Cliff Mathews.

***Heated Rivalry** is available to watch on HBO Max in the US and Sky and NOW in the UK.*

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