

Home > Opinion > 'Heated Rivalry' can single-handedly save the entertainment industry

Opinion

'Heated Rivalry' can single-handedly save the entertainment industry

By Victoria Hancock January 30, 2026

152 0



Ever since COVID and the rise of streaming services, the entertainment industry has been in a slump. Streaming services have changed how we consume media and have rattled the revenue chain. Trying to adapt to this new form of consumption while balancing financial demands has swept aside creative endeavors, leading to a stretch of cash grab movies. Theaters and straight-to-streaming movies were overtaken by remakes, live-action adaptations and sequels featuring only A-list actors. Despite poor reviews, producers have remained too scared to take a gamble on anything new for fear of losing money. In this time of industry peril where movies and television are losing steam, in comes the smash success "Heated Rivalry," which put aside the cash grabs and gained what all the big names had been trying – and failing – to do. With a few [Canadian tax dollars](#) and a dream, director Jacob Tierney's queer hockey romance "Heated Rivalry" stumbled into the most talked-about show on the block. However, to call "Heated Rivalry's" success sheer luck wouldn't be true. Its success is the culmination of everything consumers have been looking for in entertainment in the last five years.

While some may just chalk up the success of "Heated Rivalry" to the story alone, that's not the case. Every small decision in the casting, production and release combined to create the perfect



A still from "Heated Rivalry." The show has already been confirmed for a second season. Photo courtesy @heatedrivalrycrave/Instagram

environment to shape a cultural phenomenon not seen since the days of cable television. A big aspect that kept this show consistently in the public eye was its weekly releases. Outside of the two-episode premiere, the six episodes released one-by-one on a weekly basis, straying from the presently favored format of streaming television in which seasons are released all at once or in multi-episode chunks. By returning to the practice of weekly episodes, the release of a new episode became an event akin to holidays, bringing friends together for watch parties and fostering communities in a time where social isolation has been prevalent. On top of the social aspect, viewers spent the entire week between episodes discussing what happened and what they believed was going to happen next, garnering more interest and traction than if all episodes dropped at once. Even a month after the season finale, "Heated Rivalry" is still flooding social media with updates on the actors, new discoveries from the episodes and what will come next.

Another aspect that resonated with "Heated Rivalry" was the presence of new actors on the scene. While most media nowadays have star-studded casts teeming with household names, not a single star of the new show was a familiar face. The most recognizable name from the cast is the actress for Rose Landry, Sophie Nélisse. She appears as Teen Shauna in "Yellowjackets," a Showtime thriller drama with a cult following and critical acclaim but not necessarily huge traction. Besides this, the stars of the show are completely new names to the Hollywood scene, with Hudson Williams portraying Canadian hockey player Shane Hollander and Connor Storrie portraying his Russian rival Ilya Rozanov. Fans of the show have agreed that these two are perfect for these roles and lauded them for their acting, something that might not have happened if they cast the two biggest names without concerning chemistry or truth to the character. It has also enabled Williams and Storrie to shoot to stardom, allowing new actors to break into an increasingly more exclusive field. Adding new, talented faces increased the traction to "Heated Rivalry" as people wanted to see new faces that they couldn't see elsewhere.

Illustration by Seth Wallen/The Daily Campus

While the show has already made leaps and bounds in fixing some of the problems of the current entertainment industry, it's making choices going forward that add to its potential success. One of the main issues in media is currently the time it takes between seasons of shows. One of the most prevalent examples is the Netflix series "Stranger Things," which took three years between the final two seasons, leading to the eventual fall off and not as much interest in the ending. With "Heated Rivalry's" unexpectedly fast renewal for a second season, Tierney plans to write the scripts, shoot and have the highly anticipated season out within 18 months of its announcement. This quick turnaround makes use of the interest garnered without losing energy while proving the years between seasons is unnecessary and harmful. The series also plans to have merch proceeds go directly to the actors when their likeness is used, an action foreign to film and television. Hopefully, this will help to support actors financially and create an environment actors want to work in.

In summary, "Heated Rivalry" highlights what consumers want in media: something new. New faces, new stories, new content. People are tired of the same actors telling the same stories over and over again. We want something we haven't seen before with the right actors for the role, not just names we know. People love "Heated Rivalry" not just because it's a queer romance with some spicy scenes, but because it's feeding us these stories exactly how we want to consume them. If other big names take a page from their book, I believe the entertainment industry can find its feet again to continue making truly riveting content.

TAGS Canadian Tax Dollars Entertainment Industry Heated Rivalry Seth Wallen illustration



Previous article [The Modern Monster: Haunting the narrative and points of no return in 'Yellowjackets'](#) Next article [Square Peg selling alcohol again after 3-day suspension, fine](#)

Victoria Hancock

RELATED ARTICLES

Opinion
Mark Carney says the liberal world order is dead, so what's next?

Opinion
Welcoming back 2016: Why we have become so nostalgic

Opinion
Patrick's Politics: How Trump has made planning for storms worse



Leave a Reply

FEATURED

Ava's Angle: The Fernando Mendoza effect
January 30, 2026

Famous art scholar explores the development of modern Cuban art in the 1940s
January 30, 2026

Mark Carney says the liberal world order is dead, so what's next?
January 30, 2026

Square Peg selling alcohol again after 3-day suspension, fine
January 30, 2026

New York Giants Offensive Coordinator options post-Monken
January 29, 2026

Patrick's Politics: How Trump has made planning for storms worse
January 29, 2026

UConn reminds students to be aware of their safety in the new semester
January 29, 2026

Load more >