MUSIC

'Heated Rivalry' and collective joy at Nashville's queer hockey rave

Class, the pop hockey nonsense in Kingsport, Nashville

Justice Wilson
Nashville Scene

Advertisement

"Heated Rivalry" lounge room in, here, laughter. See the shot videos.
Tennessee Pride, 1985 Lauren Hadley Hockey, Nick Wolf UP of Grant Hockey and Ice Cream Social at Class Hockey and Lounge
Justice Wilson

Key Points

- A sold-out queer party in Nashville celebrated the hit HBO film series "Heated Rivalry."
- The Class Hockey community formed its own professional hockey players and has hosted LGBTQ+ events.
- Fans gathered at the Studio C and viewing a sold-out party for the queer community and allies.
- The series has also brought new success to artists on its soundtrack, including Nashville singer Elina Vida.

With Nashville frozen over, the city has been in desperate need of a reboot.

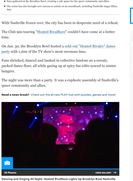
The Clash song "Rudy, Can't Fail" wouldn't have come at a better time.

On Sat. 20, the Brooklyn Bowl hosted a sold-out "Heated Rivalry" dance party with Class of the TV show's most nervous fans.

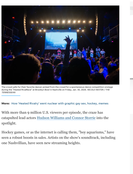
Fans attended, danced and backed in collective fandom on a crowds, packed dance floor, all while gawing up at spicy fan edits synced to intro songs.

The night was down-there a party. It was a euphoric assembly of Nashville's queer community and allies.

Read a scene from! - Check out a few of our RLV fan with pouches, gawing and charm!



Dancing and Gawing All Night - Heated Rivalry Lounge by Brooklyn Bowl Nashville
Tennessee Pride, 1985 Lauren Hadley Hockey, Nick Wolf UP of Grant Hockey and Ice Cream Social at Class Hockey and Lounge
Justice Wilson



Fans gawing and dancing at the Heated Rivalry lounge, hosted by Class Hockey, at Brooklyn Bowl in Nashville on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2026. (Justice Wilson | For Tennessean)
Justice Wilson | Nashville Scene

Hiatus - Fans "Heated Rivalry" watch marathon with graphic gaps, sex, hockey, memes.

With more than a million U.S. viewers per episode, the cruse has catapulted lead actors Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie into the spotlight.

Hockey games, or at the internet is calling them, "live sportsmen," have seen a robust boosts in sales. Artists on the show's soundtrack, including one Nashville, have seen new streaming heights.

Fans gawing and dancing at the Heated Rivalry lounge, hosted by Class Hockey, at Brooklyn Bowl in Nashville on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2026. (Justice Wilson | For Tennessean)
Justice Wilson | Nashville Scene

LGBTQ+ visibility in sports has reached a new peak as athletes around the world watch the show and feel new strength and solidarity in come out as gay.

At its core, "Heated Rivalry" is a love story for the ages. And it's traveled all the way from Canada to the American South.

The cuse has visited Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Dallas and more, with dozens of stops still ahead. It will return to Nashville on Feb. 14.

Advertisement

Fans gawing and dancing at the Heated Rivalry lounge, hosted by Class Hockey, at Brooklyn Bowl in Nashville on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2026. (Justice Wilson | For Tennessean)
Justice Wilson | Nashville Scene

Nashville's 'Heated Rivalry' fandom shows up and out

As Tennessean deal with the lingering power outages from Winter Storm Fern, morale has been low.

"When your power is out for weeks in Nashville and the Heated Rivalries is the only thing keeping you going," on TikTok user said.

From a p.m. to a.m., participants traded their winter coats for hockey jerseys, fishnets and glitter.

Fans exchanged bracelets with beaded catchphrases from the show, A la Bedfam during the "Ken Tour."
Cassidy Hayes, age 28, said Dana Binder, 34, showed up in matching Hollander and Rozanne jerseys.

"The energy is actually immaculate. It's beautiful. Growth ... you see it (in) strom" Binder said.

Advertisement

"Especially in the South, this is amazing to see," Hayes said. "Hope this energy sty."

Sex friends Josh Brown and Caroline Brooks found the event from a post on TikTok.

Allan Ray, cosplaying as Allan Lacroix from the series and Connor Storrie from the show, poses for a photo with the "Heated Rivalry" lounge, hosted by Class Hockey, at Brooklyn Bowl in Nashville on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2026. (Justice Wilson | For Tennessean)
Justice Wilson | Nashville Scene

"The ceremonies were full of people that said they wanted to go but didn't want to go alone. Some got created a Grindr, and there's a lot of us here that met through the Grindr," Brooks said.

They all came from different places. Brown traveled from Crossville, Tennessee, about two hours away.

Advertisement

"It feels hope that it was big enough to make a second night for it here," Brooks said.

"It's brought a lot of people together," Brown added.

Nicole Lawrence, from Gallatin, Tenn., and Lauren Hadley, from Nashville, pose for a photo with the "Heated Rivalry" lounge, hosted by Class Hockey, at Brooklyn Bowl in Nashville on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2026. (Justice Wilson | For Tennessean)
Justice Wilson | Nashville Scene

In Alex Hall's jersey and Eglin Bashed, Eric Brittany Spears, Leah Gage, Rob Model, Tessy Rosa and Harry Rylon blasted. Compilations of the show's most memorable moments played on a screen behind the DJ.

Fans screeched when their favorite characters appeared on the screen, and no pools were clutched when Shane and Ilya's sexual moments popped up.

Nicole Lawrence, from Gallatin, Tenn., and Lauren Hadley, from Nashville, pose for a photo with the "Heated Rivalry" lounge, hosted by Class Hockey, at Brooklyn Bowl in Nashville on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2026. (Justice Wilson | For Tennessean)
Justice Wilson | Nashville Scene

On the technical side, the evening was not without its challenges, but most participants didn't mind.

It was a chopper dance party — the chatty DJ Zoolanna addressed the crowd between songs, calling folks onstage for dance-offs.

A malfunction made the edits blurry; the fans in some songs came through distorted.

Jared Alexander Crosson-Gabbidon Model Rio, left, and Eglin Bashed, right, dance with Tessy Rosa, center, and Harry Rylon, second from right, at the "Heated Rivalry" lounge, hosted by Class Hockey, at Brooklyn Bowl in Nashville on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2026. (Justice Wilson | For Tennessean)
Justice Wilson | Nashville Scene

Nashville singer featured on the 'Heated Rivalry' soundtrack

While the cuse only featured two songs from the show, all of the soundtrack's artists have experienced major spikes in streaming numbers.

A fan changed Nashville pop singer Elina Ivan's life.

Her song "Unnerved" plays in the show's final episode over a car radio during a pivotal scene.

Ivan's L.A. based agency, which showcases Asian American artists, landed her the spot on the soundtrack. They called it a "minor placement" on a less-budget limited series. Now, the song has reached more than 700,000 streams.

Nicole Model, left, and Rio, right, dance with Tessy Rosa, second from right, at the "Heated Rivalry" at Brooklyn Bowl in Nashville on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2026. (Justice Wilson | For Tennessean)
Justice Wilson | Nashville Scene

"It feels really cool to see the numbers," Ivan said. "I've been at this for a long time, and this felt like a big break."

One of the show's major themes is Asian representation, and for Ivan, a queer, Asian American artist, it's been "surreal" to be part of a project that showcases these identities.

Advertisement

She can feel her fan base growing.

"I love that the people listening are younger people who obviously are not homophobic," she said.

"I want to feel like I'm supporting a story that is beautiful."

Jessica Lawrence and Lauren Hadley, from Nashville, pose for a photo with the "Heated Rivalry" at Brooklyn Bowl in Nashville on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2026. (Justice Wilson | For Tennessean)
Justice Wilson | Nashville Scene

'This is just about love'

HuDoop through the party. It got political.

The crowd cracked its peak volume, chanting "F**** ICE." The DJ criticized President Donald Trump.

The audience lifted their middle fingers in the air, protesting the Minneapolis ICE raids that have left two people dead in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Participant Chris Stanley said the moment made him tear up.

He attended with his husband, Mark Grecky, and the two knew the night would be "a safe space."

"Isn't it amazing how we're all heading about a queer love story telled by straight people, and it's about more about violence, suffering," Stanley said. "This is just about love."

Participant Chris Stanley and his husband, Mark Grecky, at the "Heated Rivalry" at Brooklyn Bowl in Nashville on Friday, Jan. 20, 2026.
Justice Wilson | Nashville Scene

"For parents, I think it's an important story," Grecky added.

"The homophobia, for them, comes from a place of terror for their children having a marginalized place in the world. It's a story about being in that place can be beautiful. It can have a really positive impact on your life," he said.

Advertisement

"I wouldn't change being gay for anything."

Audrey Gibbs is a music journalist at The Tennessean. You can reach her at agibbs@tennessean.com.

If you purchase through our links, the USA Today Network may earn a commission. Prices were accurate at the time of publication but may change.

One Teaspoon Every Night Burns Body Fat Like Never Before, You Will Fit In Your Pants Again!
Eat 1 Teaspoon Every Day And See What Happens A Week Later [video]

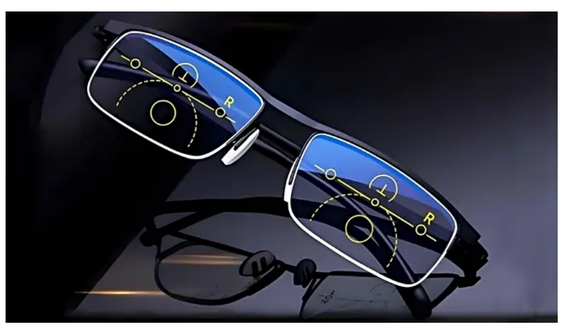
Severe Ringing in Ears is Being Linked To a Common Food. Cut It Out Now
Wellness Insight | Ad

Aging is not Caused by Sugar and Stress. Meet the Real Enemy of Wrinkles (Stop Doing This)
Magazine Skincare | Ad

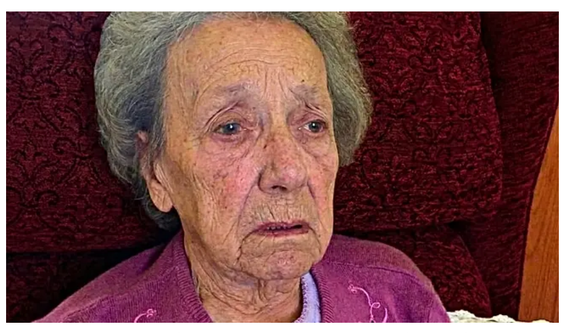
This Simple Hack That Keeps Rodents Out Of Your Engine Bay
Vamoose | Ad

47 Years of Craft – Now the Final Clearance Sale
CRAFTWORK WEEKLY | Ad

Sleep Apnea? Try This Japanese Trick (It's Genius!)
derilamemoryfoam.com | Ad



Smart Reading Glasses: Auto-Focus & Zoom for Clear Vision, Near and Far.
GekkoGifts | Ad
Learn More



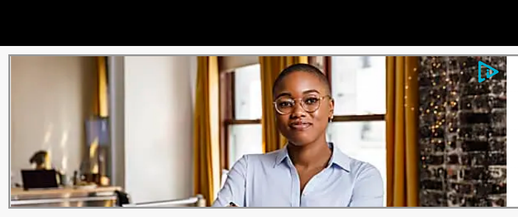
Top U.S. Alzheimer's Experts: Avoid This Drink Like It's Poison. Do You Drink It?
Journal of Neuroscience | Ad
Learn More

Alzheimer Begins When a Person Eats This Common Food - Do You Eat It?
Memory Balance Report | Ad
Learn More

Doctors: These 3 Words Often Come Before an Alzheimer's Diagnosis
Research Institute | Ad
Learn More

Advertisement

© 2026 www.knoxnews.com. All rights reserved.



Search for register my LLC
Yahoo Search | register my LLC
Learn More