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# Heated Rivalry star Kaden Connors reveals he originally auditioned for Ilya, teases Sasha's future

'I don't know anything,' Connors said about his iconic character, Sasha's, return in Season 2 of Heated Rivalry

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Photo: Crave

**Heated Rivalry** actor Kaden Connors is opening up about joining the hit hockey romance series — and revealed he almost played a very different character.

Connors, who portrays Sasha in the HBO and Crave adaptation of Rachel Reid's *Game Changers* novels, shared that he originally auditioned for the role of Ilya Rozanov, which ultimately went to Connor Storrie.

"I actually originally got the breakdown for Ilya. That's the original role I auditioned for," Connors explained, adding that the casting team later told him they liked him but were "going in a different direction" for the character.

The actor was eventually cast as Sasha, Ilya's former lover, appearing in a key storyline that adds emotional complexity to Ilya's journey in the series.

Connors also spoke about working alongside Storrie, praising his co-star's professionalism and easygoing nature on set. "He's such a kind person and a talented actor. Great combination... He's so easy to work with," Connors said.

Reflecting on filming their scenes together, Connors noted that their characters entered the moment with very different emotional energy. "It was such a joy and pleasure to work with him... Ilya, if you've watched the show, the moment before where he was with his dad... he's coming into that scene probably not as playful as Sasha is."

As for whether fans will see Sasha again when *Heated Rivalry* returns for a second season, Connors said he genuinely doesn't know yet.

"I don't know anything. I'm going to be honest, and I'm not just saying that," he said when asked about Sasha's potential return.

The series, which follows the intense rivalry-turned-romance between NHL stars Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov, has quickly built a passionate fan base and recently won Outstanding New TV Series at the GLAAD Media Awards. With Season 2 now in development, viewers are eager to see which characters, including Sasha, might return to complicate the story even further.



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