



News

Runaway HBO Love Story Hit Ranked a Fan Favorite of TV Couples

The enemies to lovers pairing has captivated fans both on screen and on the page.

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By Kendra Syrdal Entertainment News Writer



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Connor Storrie and Hudson Williams attend the premiere of “Heated Rivalry” at TIFF Lightbox

Photo by Harold Feng on Getty Images

Key Points

- 'Heated Rivalry' became a top HBO Max and Crave hit, debuting in November 2025.
- The show's forbidden hockey romance has been praised for “sincerity” and “extraordinary chemistry.”
- Fans await season two in 2027 and the final book 'Unrivaled' in summer 2027.

It's the year of the hockey romance, and this couple is goals for more reason than one. The HBO show *Heated Rivalry* has cemented itself in the cultural zeitgeist. Fans of the runaway hit streamer have officially ranked lead characters **Shane Hollander** and **Ilya**

Rozanov as one of their favorite TV couples according to [The Guardian](#). They call Ilya and Shane’s forbidden romance filled with “sincerity” and “extraordinary chemistry” as well as saying that *Heated Rivalry* “is steamy, yes, but entirely earnest in its depiction of these two men so palpably yearning for [each other.]”

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Portrayed by **Hudson Williams** and **Conner Storrie** in the series, *Heated Rivalry* hit streaming in late November of 2025. The show was a smash hit and became the second top driver of viewership to [HBO Max](#) in their entire catalog. Additionally, it is Crave’s most-watched [original series](#) to date. A second season is in the works, set for a 2027 premiere. Storrie and Williams will both return to reprise their roles.

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Based on the enemies to lovers romance novel of the same name, [Heated Rivalry](#) follows Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov who are star hockey players drafted the same year to rival teams. Shane is more shy and quiet, whereas Ilya is brazen and extremely cocky. After the players spontaneous connect and hook up, they maintain a casual relationship over the years that blossoms into something more. But their relationship is challenged not only by their incredibly different personalities, but by homophobia, other romances, and the overtly competitive nature of their chosen sport.

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Heated Rivalry is technically the second book in author Rachel Reid's "Game Changers" series, the first of two that follow Shane and Ilya's partnership. A final book following the beloved couple titled [Unrivaled](#) is set for release in the summer of 2027. In addition to the trilogy, Reid has released standalone short stories featuring the couple on [her website](#).

Readers and viewers alike have fallen in love with Shane and Ilya for their wit, charm, and [palpable chemistry](#) both on the screen and on the page. Fans are so ready to see where their journeys will take them in the upcoming sequels.

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About The Author



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Kendra Syrdal is a writer and media strategist based in the Pacific Northwest. She is a dedicated storyteller and culture enthusiast with more than a decade of experience in all things online.

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