



star turn **Harrison Browne is blazing a trail for trans hockey players in Hollywood**

Ken Schultz
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For many LGBTQ+ actors, a role in *Heated Rivalry* would've been the highlight of their year.

But to get a sense of how impactful transgender creative Harrison Browne's year was, consider that his appearance on *Heated Rivalry* turned out to be one of his two major media moments set in the queer hockeyverse in 2025.

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Yes, Browne's work was such a unique source of Pride, we had to create a whole new genre to describe it.

Browne turned up in episode four of *Heated Rivalry* as Ilya Rozanov's teammate Connors, showing the closeted Russian star a newspaper headline about Shane Hollander's "straight" dating life. In doing so, Browne was already accomplishing a major LGBTQ+ life goal: sharing a gym with Connor Storrie.



Harrison Browne's hockey journal crosses paths with 'Heated Rivalry'

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"Representation matters, y'all!," **Browne wrote about the experience on Instagram**. He added that he was combatting imposter syndrome due to not feeling masculine enough.

"But the second I stepped on that set," he added, "I knew I belonged and my visibility in this story is important, queer hockey stories are important!"

Browne concluded that he stands proud transman "WITH AN EPIC MOUSTACHE."

As fans who remember NHL legends like **Lanny McDonald** and **Michel Goulet** can attest, an epic mustache is vital in the hockey world.



In addition to *HR*, Browne directed and co-wrote the short film *Pink Light* based on his experiences as a player in women's hockey prior to his transition. On screen, Browne plays a transgender male hockey player who suffers a massive hit on the ice and flashes back to his college age self beginning the coming out process.

By making the film, Browne wanted to use his lived experiences to illuminate the unique barriers that trans athletes have to overcome.

"It's really important to show trans athletes as people, because that's the best way to humanize this community and create those pathways for empathy," **he explained.**



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Prior to his transition, Browne put together a career to be proud of on the ice. He joined the Buffalo Beauts of the National Women's Hockey League (an precursor of the PWHL) in 2015 and a year later, **Browne publicly came out as a transgender man.**

Then with one week to go in the 2016-17 season, Browne announced **he would be retiring from women's hockey** to begin testosterone hormone therapy. Shortly thereafter, he won his first NWHL championship.

That propelled Browne to play one more season, where he won his second NWHL title. He dedicated his win to his "LGBTQ+ family" before retiring for good.

Years later, Browne was able to draw a through-line between his former life as a closeted athlete and his current one as an out trans actor. "I think playing a sport when you have to hide part of yourself and you have to lead a double life—like we do see in *Heated Rivalry*—I was doing that in real time," he reflected. "I was being somebody that I wasn't and then being somebody that I was on the ice. And I just really wanted to connect those two lives."

With *Heated Rivalry* season two receiving a green light, Browne is hoping to return to his role before the cameras so he can continue being the visible trans presence he always wanted to see in his sport.



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