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Let's Stop Comparing 'Off Campus' & 'Heated Rivalry'

Morgan Pryor • May 4, 2026, 1:12 pm



Prime Video, Crave

WHAT TO KNOW

- *Heated Rivalry* and *Off Campus* are two hockey romance TV adaptations.
- Even before *Off Campus*' premiere, it's been compared to *Heated Rivalry*.
- *Swooon* breaks down why the two series shouldn't be compared.

We thank our lucky stars every day that we were born just in time to witness the **hockey romance** renaissance. The fact that not one, but *two* **hockey romance book series** have been adapted into TV shows — *Off Campus* and *Heated Rivalry* — within a year of each other? Absolutely stunning.

But... there's also a catch. Ever since *Heated Rivalry* became a global phenomenon and the ***Off Campus* promo started**, there have been endless comparisons between the two. Months before anyone even saw a glimpse of *Off Campus*, some fans had already made assumptions.

It needs to stop now.

Heated Rivalry and *Off Campus* both fall into the hockey romance category, yes, and they're coming out within months of each other. They also both offer major spice and a little taste of hockey on the side. (Let's be real, no one's coming to these stories for the sports.) But, as one X user aptly puts it in [a viral post](#), "Saying *Off Campus* and *Heated Rivalry* are the same because they both have ice hockey is like saying *How to Train Your Dragon* and *Game of Thrones* are the same because they both have dragons." These two shows are drastically different, and comparing them in advance gives people the wrong expectations. It's also a disservice to both of them.

First, let's lay out how different they are, starting with the series you're probably less familiar with (unless you're a hockey romance reader). *Off Campus* is described by Prime Video itself as a [college soap](#). Based on Elle Kennedy's book series of the same name, Season 1 follows 2015's *The Deal*, which sees Briar University hockey player Garrett Graham ([Belmont Cameli](#)) and music major Hannah Wells ([Ella Bright](#)) fake date and fall for each other. *The Deal*, like every subsequent book in the series, is hot and fun while delving into deeper issues that come with new adulthood. In *The Deal*, without broaching spoiler territory, that's about healing from past trauma and learning to trust again.

You don't need us to tell you that *Heated Rivalry* is a [completely different universe](#), covering a [decade-long secret romance](#) between professional hockey players Shane Hollander ([Hudson Williams](#)) and Ilya Rozanov ([Connor Storrie](#)). *Heated Rivalry* gives fans a joyful, unreserved queer romance with a happily ever after, while challenging toxic masculinity and the idea that queer relationships end tragically.

To compare one show to the other — or measure how good one show is by weighing it against the other — is pointless. Even if you aren't putting one of them down by saying “my hockey romance show is better than your hockey romance show,” putting them in constant conversation with each other is uninspiring and lazy.

Fans don't want or need to hear about what the *Off Campus* cast thinks of *Heated Rivalry*, or vice versa. Even if they're being compared positively, we should let these shows stand on their own.



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We need to remember the big picture, too: We want more romance shows to get made. We want more romance shows to be celebrated. *Off Campus* and *Heated Rivalry* aren't trying to compete against each other. Neither was created because of the other. (**Deadline** announced the *Off Campus* adaptation months **before *Heated Rivalry***. But even that doesn't really matter, because they simply fall into entirely different categories.)

Go into *Off Campus* with no preconceived notions. Both do different things, and having seen both shows, they both do them well. Let's not start a fan war for no reason at all. You can and should enjoy both!

Off Campus, Season 1, May 13, Prime Video

Heated Rivalry, Season 1, Streaming Now, Crave & HBO Max

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Kayley Teagan

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4 May, 2026

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