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There Are No Small Parts in ‘Heated Rivalry’

Six months since the smash hit arrived on streaming and consumed the world, three supporting stars of "Heated Rivalry" tell IndieWire how their lives have changed since the show changed everything.

BY EMILY MASKELL 
JUNE 26, 2026 10:00 AM



Cast and Crew of 'Heated Rivalry,' including (L-R) Rachel Reid, Nadine Bhabha, Ksenia Daniela Kharlamova, Jacob Tierney, Hudson Williams, Brendan Brady, Harrison Browne, Robbie Graham-Kuntz, and Sophie Nélisse celebrate during the 2026 Canadian Screen Awards at CBC Broadcast Centre on May 31, 2026 in Toronto, Ontario *Getty Images*



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Last December, “**Heated Rivalry**” fans descended on *the cottage* for the show’s finale, and their obsession and dedication hasn’t wavered since. Six months after the show’s first season finale premiered — a contained episode that **consummated the star-crossed romance of rivals-turned-lovers ice hockey players** Russian prodigy Ilya Rozanov (Connor Storrie) and Canadian treasure Shane Hollander (Hudson Williams) — **the impact of the hit Crave original is still ricocheting.**

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Storrie and Williams became overnight sensations, doing the rounds on late-night shows, becoming the talk of the town during the film awards season, and launching seeming endless new brand deals. With Season 2 expected to come in 2027, the fervor around the show has not died down.

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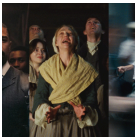
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But the series’ two leads are not the only ones whose lives have been transformed by Jacob Tierney’s sports romance. The supporting cast of “**Heated Rivalry**” has also been embraced by the show’s fervent popularity and mounting fanbase. Such a spotlight on the wider cast isn’t typical for a show, yet they are taking it in stride.

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Just a few days after a “Heated Rivalry” sweep at the Canadian Screen Awards (16 awards in total!), IndieWire sat down with key members of the show’s supporting cast to discuss how the show has transformed their careers, lives, and futures.

Ksenia Daniela Kharlamova as Svetlana Vetrova



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Ksenia Daniela Kharlamova attends the premiere of 'Heated Rivalry' at TIFF Lightbox on November 24, 2025 in Toronto, Ontario*Getty Images*

Canadian actress and model Ksenia Daniela Kharlamova, who you may have spotted in “[Adults](#)” and “Robyn Hood,” plays Ilya’s close friend and occasional sexual partner, Svetlana Vetrova, in “Heated Rivalry.”

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Early on, Kharlamova got a taste of the fervent nature of “Heated Rivalry” fandom to come. “One fan from Eastern Europe flew in for the premiere, the show wasn’t out yet, only a trailer,” she said.

The character of Svetlana was a breakthrough for Kharlamova. The role required an actor fluent in Russian and English, a detail that delighted Kharlamova. “I was so excited, because I’m half Russian, but people often don’t acknowledge it,” she said. “It was a good showcase of another part of my cultural identity.”

Predominantly in scenes opposite Storrie, whom she refers to as an “amazing scene partner,” Kharlamova praised Tierney for forging a space “where we just feel good as actors.” Previously, she has experienced “directors yell at people, they’re rude, and there’s always such a rush.” Tierney’s set was different: “he created such an amazing environment for us to really explore.”

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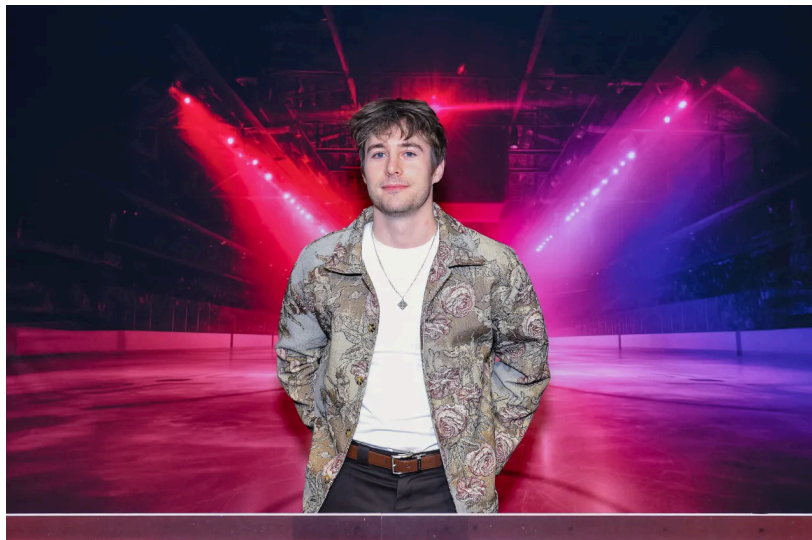
“Heated Rivalry” has had a direct impact on Kharlamova’s career. “There’s a lot of attention and a lot more opportunities,” she said. “Every young actor wishes for something like this, to be on a show that resonates, but also that has such a supportive fan base, because that carries a lot of weight with casting.” Even for indie projects, Kharlamova said that her growing following has aided her visibility. “It’s helping with stuff I want to do in the future,” she said. “It’s opening a lot of doors, and I’m very grateful.”

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Though Kharlamova can’t discuss details of the show’s second season, she shared what she would like to see for Svetlana. “I hope she gets to meet Shane at some point,” she said. “They could have a nice conversation; it would probably start a little hostile, but end very friendly. They’re both big hockey nerds, so that would be a very cute scene.”

Like “Heated Rivalry,” Kharlamova’s other upcoming projects are also being kept secret, though she teased “you might see me in ‘Sterling Point,’” [Megan Park’s drama series arriving on Prime Video this summer](#).

Callan Potter as Hayden Pike



Callan Potter attends the premiere of ‘Heated Rivalry’ at TIFF Lightbox on November 24, 2025 in Toronto, Ontario *Getty Images*

“I don’t think anyone knew the scale of the impact that the show would have. It was a shock,” said Callan Potter, who plays fan favorite Hayden Pike, Shane’s Montreal Metros teammate and best friend.

Potter joins Kharlamova in expressing that the phenomenon of “Heated Rivalry” has opened career doors. “Even in casual conversation, when I say I’m an actor, there’s the follow-up: ‘Have I seen you in anything?’” Potter said. “So many actors work so consistently, but it’s not often that you have something that you can then say. I’ve been really fortunate that I’ve had a pretty busy year; it would be silly not to attribute a good portion of that to [‘Heated Rivalry’].”

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The actor was in a play in Edmonton, Canada, when he got an Instagram DM from Tierney. “You’re my Hayden,” Potter recalled the message reading. “I hadn’t heard anything, so I wasn’t sure if I was shortlisted. It was such a wonderful surprise.”

Potter also praised the show’s leading stars. “Obviously, Hudson and Connor are killing it; they deserve all of the flowers,” he said. “It’s this amazing turn of good fortune to be part of such an amazing Canadian production.” Following Potter’s appearance on the show, his following grew, and, in a nod to a plot point in Rachel Reid’s “The Long Game”, he joined **Cameo** to deliver messages to fans who swarmed to get a personalized message from the actor.

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If Tierney stays loyal to Reid’s “The Long Game”, Potter will play a crucial part in the second season’s conflict. Speaking about what, in theory, he’d love to see in Season 2 for his character, Potter said, “I love a good argument scene. ... I love it when two characters have their position, and then it’s a fencing match. It’s so dynamic on screen!” The actor also said he’s keen to see “a really beautiful overall emotional arc” from the second season.

For his own career, Potter is keen to maintain a focus on telling stories he's passionate about. Though he does note that control over one's career can feel like an illusion. "It's hard to predict how your path is going to evolve, so much of your future is in other people's hands, and there are so many decisions that you don't make that result in the changing of your trajectory," Potter said. "I do my best to stay open. The goal is to be ready and prepared for whatever life throws at you."

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Harrison Browne as Connors



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Harrison Browne



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Harrison Browne's journey to "Heated Rivalry" is perhaps the most unique. Browne was a professional ice hockey player in the National Women's Hockey League and became the first openly transgender athlete in professional team sports in North America. In "Heated Rivalry," Browne is Connors, Ilya's teammate, who relays the rumor that Shane is dating famous actress Rose Landry ([Sophie Nélisse](#)).

Browne originally auditioned for Hayden, but Tierney's team carved out the role of Connors for him. "I'm not in the position where I usually get offers," Browne said of previous auditions. "When I retired from women's hockey, I didn't know where I fit in; ['Heated Rivalry'] was a really nice way to feel like I belong in this sport."

2025 was a massive year for Browne, with the release of his co-authored book “Let Us Play: Winning the Battle for Gender Diverse Athletes,” his short film “Pink Light” premiered at TIFF, and his “Heated Rivalry” episodes. “I’ve been speaking on trans issues as a public figure since 2016, and the growth that took 10 years to build got shattered within a week of this show,” he said. “My book sales have increased ... my first time going to the States promoting my book, half of the crowd were like, ‘I know you from “Heated Rivalry.”’ It’s deeply influenced my life and helped me money-wise.”

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Browne also emphasised the show’s impact on wider ice hockey culture, likening Hollander and Rozanov jerseys to the “new Pride flag” at games. “Heated Rivalry” is also holding hockey accountable. Browne said, “The BS meter with [hockey fans] is: hockey is broken, why should we give it our time? Why should we give you our money when the Vegas Knights have a sexual predator in their net [in 2018, Vegas Knights’ goaltender Carter Heart was **charged with sexual assault**] and the USA Olympic team has the FBI director at the Olympics [**FBI Director Kash Patel was criticized after partying with the US men’s ice hockey team Olympic win**]? Is hockey fixed because of ‘Heated Rivalry’? No, but it’s a step in the right direction.”

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In terms of his career, Browne is not slowing down. “There’s definitely a sense of urgency to take advantage of this new spotlight,” he said.

His next project is transforming “Pink Light” into a feature. With a Telefilm Canada grant to develop the film, “Pink Light” will center on women’s college hockey. “I’m really excited to take this moment to shine a light on women’s hockey; it’s an amazing space for LGBTQ+ individuals,” he said. “The fact we got a grant with my name attached as a first-time director speaks volumes to this hockey moment right now.”

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