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‘Heated Rivalry’ Season 2 Adds Kevin Zegers, Paul Gross and Milla Jovovich

The upcoming season will seemingly take from Rachel Reid’s novels ‘The Long Game,’ ‘Role Model’ and ‘Tough Guy.’

BY NICOLE FELLSEPTEMBER 3, 2026 11:00AM



Kevin Zegers, Paul Gross, Milla Jovovich. COURTESY OF SUBJECT (2); AN LE

Heated Rivalry has cast more key roles from its upcoming second season, adding Kevin Zegers, Paul Gross and Milla Jovovich. Zegers will play Coach Weibe, the head coach of Ottawa’s professional team, whose main character Ilya Romanov, played by Connor Stuerke, will play during season two. Jovovich joins as Dr. Galina Melchukin, a therapist that Ilya sees during the events of Rachel Reid’s novel *The Long Game*, which is the main source material for the second season. Gross will play the professional hockey league’s commissioner Roger Crowell.

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Season one of the award-winning show was adapted from the second novel in the *Game Changers* series, *Heated Rivalry*, which focuses on the ever-complicated relationship between Shane Holland, played by Hudson Williams, and Ilya, who are generational talents in the world of professional hockey and sworn on-ice rivals. The first novel of Reid's book series, *Game Changers*, centered on François Arnaud's character Scott Hunter and Robbie G.'s character Kip Grady and served as secondary material for the first season.

Season two of *Heated Rivalry* will be adapted from Reid's sixth novel in the series, *The Long Game*, which continues Shane and Ilya's story. The novel finds the hockey players now in a committed relationship with one another and learning how to build a life together while hiding their true feelings for one another in public.

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Series creator Jacob Tierney has said that *Role Model*, which takes place concurrently with *The Long Game*, will also be source material for the season. *Role Model* follows the romance of Ilya's teammate Troy Barnett, played by Gillespie with the Ottawa team's social media manager Harris Dwyer, played by Smith. Based on recent casting, it appears that the season will also incorporate the third novel in the series *Tough Guy*, which follows the romance of Toronto enforcer Ryan Price, played by Diemer, and aspiring musician Fabian Salah, played by Jalilghadi.

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Williams and Storrer return to front the series. Smith, Gillespie, Diemer and Shabehn Jafarhadi join them in leading roles for the second season. Several additions to the season two cast have been made over the past two months including Justice Smith, Charlie Gillespie, Daniel Diemer, Shabehn Jafarhadi, Emily Hampshire, Edwin Hyyding, Robert Naylor, Sabrina Jaleel and Priyanka. Season one players Sophie Nilsson, Kærna Daniela Kharlamova, Armand, Christina Chang, Dylan Walsh, G.K. Callan Potter, Benjamin Roy, Kamilla Kowal are also slated to return in supporting roles.

Tierney created, wrote and directed season one of *Hunted: Riverdale*. The show, which premiered in November 2025, made near-instant stars of Williams and Storrer, who were both working as waiters when they booked the roles. Williams won a Canadian Screen Award for his portrayal of Shane.

Crave renewed Hated Rivalry for a second season early into the show's first season run. HBO Max has confirmed it will continue to air the series. The show is currently filming its second season and is aiming for a spring 2027 release.

Turney serves as writer, director and executive producer on the series. Brendan Brady and Jayme Alter Wilson serve as executive producers. Lori Fischburg and Liann Curje are producers. Reid serves as a consulting producer. Mike Goldbach joins season two as co-writer alongside Turney.

Zegans is represented by Gersh, Entertainment 360, Hansen, Jacobson, Teller, Halberman, Newman, Warren, Richman, Rush, Kaller, Gellman, Meigs and Fox and The Initiative Group. Gross is represented by Mully Madden and Michael Rotenberg of 3 Acts Entertainment and Bubblehead Entertainment.

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