

Gym Comedy *Dumbbells* Is Surprisingly Sweet at Its Core

For a vanity project written by its two hunky male leads, Christopher Livingston's gym-based comedy *Dumbbells* is surprisingly sweet at its core.

Granted, we're living in a post-*Pain & Gain* world, so any movie about gym culture made by people who aren't utter misanthropes is a breath of fresh air, but *Dumbbells* manages to be pleasant and largely inoffensive despite early indications that it might turn into a T&A-fest.

Working at a run-down gym, failed college basketball player Chris (Brian Drolet) clashes with the gym's new owner, former male model Jack (former male model Hoyt Richards, recently seen in *Showgirls 2: Penny's from Heaven*), who intends to turn the gym into a reality show.



Sitcom complications arise when Chris falls in love with Jack's niece Rachel (Taylor Cole), but the bro-centric *Dumbbells* is mostly about Chris and Jack's relationship — the female characters are largely stereotypes — and screenwriters Drolet and Richards do have good onscreen chemistry.

"Walking on Sunshine" is used twice without irony, and the obligatory T&A and gay-panic jokes are both kept to a relative minimum, though there's one shockingly anti-Semitic gag that even *Pain & Gain* director Michael Bay might have considered too broad.

It's far from perfect (or even *Perfect*), but *Dumbbells* is better than it looks, and it means well.