

Film Review: High-Energy ‘Battle of the Year’ Needs More Originality

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 20, 2013 - 5:17pm

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CHICAGO – “B Boys” – or as they’re known by the more familiar term as break dancers – are high energy street performers who combine gymnastic moves with tight choreographed dance. This all comes together in a film depicting an international competition called “Battle of the Year.”



This is basically a hey-kids-let’s-put-on-a-show for post millennial street tough dancers, as if Gene Kelly had been born in Brooklyn in the 1990s and learned his moves break dancing on cardboard in the ‘hood. The gyrations ooze aggressive testosterone, and the “dream team” characters in the film highlight these traits, but they’re also a dance troupe putting together steps for a talent show. Although updated to now – with sneaker endorsements and hip-hop beats – it’s still about the show, and overcoming the obstacles to get to the so-called Battle of the Year. There is copious borrowing from other sports movies to get there – particularly “Rocky” – and there is a sense that a modern storyline such as this could find they’re own original path.

Dante Graham (Laz Alonso) is a hip-hop mogul who has a problem. The United States has not won a B Boy competition – the Battle of the Year – in several years, despite break dancing being invented here. Germany, France, Russia and especially South Korea have taken the reins, and Graham is afraid that interest is waning in the States, which means that interest will wane in his product line. Something’s got to give.

What the mogul does is recruit Jason Blake (Josh Holloway), a burnt out basketball coach who used to B Boy dance with Graham. The former coach is devastated by the death of his wife and child, and Graham offers him redemption if he’ll coach America’s B Boy team for the Battle of the Year, taking place in France. Blake assembles a “dream team” with the help of Franklyn (Josh Peck), and is further aided by choreographer Stacy (Caity Lotz). The question is can the new coach get over his demons – and the team’s problems – to win it all?

“Battle of the Year” openings everywhere on September 20th. Featuring Josh Holloway, Laz Alonzo, Josh Peck and Caity Lotz. Written by Brin Hill and Chris Parker. Directed by Benson Lee. Rated “PG-13”

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Freeze!: The B Boys Strike a Pose in 'Battle of the Year'

Photo credit: Screen Gems



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