

# Who's going to win the Oscars?

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It happens every year. The Motion Picture Academy forces movie fans to endure a drawn-out, disorganized awards ceremony which tends to focus more around corporate sponsorship and network ratings than the presentation of the awards themselves. Hidden in the glut of the "gala" event is the honorary presentation of Oscar, the almighty god of celluloid.

When the Oscars are presented on March 26, people will pay attention. But with all the "Lifetime Achievement" awards and all the blundering speeches given by winners who thank everyone but their elementary school crossing guards, the significance of the Oscar presentations will be severely diluted.

So here, submitted for your approval, is a summary of the important contests and their prospective winners. Just the categories which create the status quo for the next year's film contenders. Besides, who really cares about the award for "Best Gaffer in a Foreign Embalment Documentary" anyway?

## Best Picture

This is the film industry's most coveted award. This year's lead contenders, *Born on the Fourth of July* and *Driving Miss Daisy*, should dominate voting for this prize, and they will figure prominently throughout the remainder of the evening. The obscure *My Left Foot* can be pretty much discarded, and the same can be said for the commendable sleeper *Dead Poets Society*. The final prospect, *Field of Dreams*,

may benefit from its consistent critical acclaim, but it pales when compared to the other contenders.

*Born on the Fourth* should edge out the competition to take the award for this category.

## Best Actor

Look for Tom Cruise to win this award for his riveting performance in *Born on the Fourth of July*. Cruise's portrayal of a paraplegic veteran left viewers emotionally drained and announced the actor's coming of age. Cruise deserves the Oscar for his ability to carry a film of this magnitude through a role which stripped him of his previous market appeal.

Cruise's primary competition comes from Academy favorite Morgan Freeman, who could earn a substantial portion of the voting for his key role in *Driving Miss Daisy*.

## Best Actress

If any category contains a runaway winner, it will be this one. Michelle Pfeiffer, whose sizzling role in *The Fabulous Baker Boys* cemented her position as one of Hollywood's most sought-after actresses, should blow away the competition for the Best Actress award.

Jessica Tandy (*Driving Miss Daisy*) is the only other leading lady who can threaten Pfeiffer, but she shouldn't anticipate a trip to the podium.

## Best Supporting Actor

The competition for this category may be a bit closer. Comedian Dan Aykroyd has a

slight chance of surprising a few people by winning for his part in *Driving Miss Daisy*. Aykroyd would not be the first popular TV entertainer to capture an Oscar; Goldie Hawn has already been commended for her transition to the big screen.

Aykroyd must beat two strong contenders before expecting an award. Marlon Brando, a longtime Academy favorite, provided the only hope for the otherwise boring *A Dry White Season*; the effort earned him a nomination.

Danny Aiello poses a formidable threat to his competitors for his weighty performance in filmmaker Spike Lee's controversial *Do the Right Thing*. Aiello deserves the award, but Lee's volatile relationship with the Academy may hinder Aiello's chances.

## Best Supporting Actress

There are no clear candidates for this award. And since I have

only seen one of the movies which provided nominees, I could only pick Dianne Wiest (*Parenthood*) to win, but her performance was not strong enough. So we'll go with Julia Roberts, the only other prospect that I've even heard of.

## Best Director

Oliver Stone, who swept the Oscars a few years ago with his film *Platoon*, should stay in character and sweep the kudos for his graphic, unyielding control of *Born on the Fourth of July*. Stone has already won the Director's Guild of America award, which has proven to be a very reliable indicator for the presentation of the Oscars.

Newcomers Kenneth Branagh (*Henry V*) and Jim Sheridan (*My Left Foot*) have been honored enough by being nominated; in the history of the academy, only four directors have been awarded for their debut productions.

Academy favorite Woody

Allen may do well in the voting, but Stone has nothing to worry about.

## Best Original Score

John Williams has distanced himself from all other competitors since his precedent-setting score for *Star Wars*. This year Williams has been nominated for his work with two films, *Born on the Fourth of July*, and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. (How many times does Williams need to be congratulated for his Indiana Jones theme anyway?)

The emotional score for *Born on the Fourth*, however, merits the highest praise, so Williams is certain to blow away the other nominees. I'm boycotting this category anyway, since the academy overlooked the incredible jazz performance Harry Connick Jr. contributed to Rob Reiner's *When Harry Met Sally...*

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