



The Oscars are tonight; news that makes grown men shrug all around the world. But since it's my job to report on movies, that means it's a pretty big night for me and the tens of people on our boards that realize that you can be addicted to sports and still get into movies as well.

This will be the second year of having ten pictures nominated for Best Picture, but it will be very different. Last year, there was a wide open field, and any one of five films were considered possibilities for the win ("Avatar", "The Hurt Locker", "Inglourious Basterds", "Up In the Air", and "A Serious Man"). This year? It's a two horse race.

There also seems to be a lot less drama this year. The acting categories have prohibitive favorites in three of the four categories, and there is no 800 pound gorilla in the room this year similar to "Avatar" and the 800 pound ego of James Cameron going up against his ex-wife Katherine Bigelow for Best Director.

So let's look at what's going to be happening tonight. As always, I'll make my predictions on who will win, as well as give my feelings on who SHOULD win...often they aren't the same. It was an OK record last year, with me hitting 5 out of the 8 major categories correctly...but that's below my average, so hopefully I'll be a little better this year.

Best Supporting Actor:

The nominees: Christian Bale in "The Fighter", John Hawkes in "Winter's Bone", Jeremy Renner in "The Town", Mark Ruffalo in "The Kid's Are All Right", Geoffrey Rush in "The King's Speech"

Overlooked in this category: Andrew Garfield, Arnie Hammer and Justin Timberlake from "The Social Network", Matt Damon from "True Grit", Tom Hardy from "Inception". (Did I really just put down on paper that I'm bothered that Justin Timberlake wasn't nominated for an acting award?)

My Preference: I can't really decide between Bale, Hawkes, and Rush. All three were incredible.

My Guess for Winning: Christian Bale

Details: This is going to be three straight years where it's a total slam dunk in this category, following Christoph Walz last year for "Basterds" and Heath Ledger in 2009 for "The Dark Knight". The other nominees were great, but Bale's transformation to the crack addicted big brother will certainly win him the award.

Best Supporting Actress:

The nominees: Amy Adams in "The Fighter", Helena Bonham Carter in "The King's Speech", Melissa Leo in "The Fighter", Hailee Steinfeld in "True Grit", Jacki Weaver in "Animal Kingdom".

Overlooked in this Category: Mila Kunis and Barbara Hershey for “Black Swan”, Julianne Moore for “The Kids Are All Right”.

My Preference: Hailee Steinfeld

My Guess for Winning: Amy Adams

Details: Once upon a time, Melissa Leo was the prohibitive favorite, but then she pissed too many people off by her brazen campaigning for the award. She still might win it, as might Steinfeld and even Bonham Carter...but I think Adams will walk off with it, which would not bother me in the least.

Best Actress:

The nominees: Annette Bening in “The Kid’s Are All Right”, Nicole Kidman in “Rabbit Hole”, Jennifer Lawrence in “Winter’s Bone”, Natalie Portman in “Black Swan”, Michelle Williams in “Blue Valentine”

Overlooked in this Category: Noomi Rapace for “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo”, Diane Ladd for “Secretariat”

My Preference: Natalie Portman

My Guess for Winning: Natalie Portman

Details: There is a slight chance for an upset here, as Annette Bening could squeak by as a “lifetime achievement” type win since she has often been so close but has never won. But the smart money is on Portman for her fearless performance as a fragile ballerina going mad under

the pressure of a leading role.

Best Actor:

The nominees: Javier Bardem in "Biutiful", Jeff Bridges in "True Grit", Jesse Eisenberg in "The Social Network", Colin Firth in "The King's Speech", James Franco in "127 Hours"

Overlooked in this category: Ewan McGregor for "The Ghost Writer", Ryan Gosling for "Blue Valentine", Mark Wahlburgh for "The Fighter", Leonardo DiCaprio for "Inception".

My Preference: Colin Firth

My Guess for Winning: Colin Firth

Details: If you have seen this movie, you will have no doubt in your mind that Firth should be the winner. It was an amazing performance from the man who quite possibly should have won last year.

Best Adapted Screenplay:

The nominees: "127 Hours", "The Social Network", "Toy Story 3", "True Grit", "Winter's Bone"

Overlooked in the Category: "The Town", "The Ghost Writer", "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo"

My Preference: "The Social Network"

My Guess for Winning: "The Social Network"

Details: Another category that "experts" are thinking is a near certainty. Aaron Sorkin is loved in Hollywood, and his brilliant script is what made this movie so enjoyable.

Best Original Screenplay:

The nominees: "Another Year", "The Fighter", "Inception", "The Kid's Are All Right", "The King's Speech"

Overlooked in the Category: "Black Swan"

My Preference: "The King's Speech" Although it wouldn't bother me a bit if Christopher Nolan won for "Inception", which is one of the most original films of the past 10 years, and it would be great if that kind of creativity were to be rewarded.

My Guess for Winning: "The King's Speech"

Details: The awards just keep coming for this film.

Best Director:

The nominees: Darren Aronofsky for "Black Swan", David O. Russell for "The Fighter", Tom Hooper for "The King's Speech", David Fincher for "The Social Network", Joel and Ethan Coen for "True Grit"

Overlooked in the Category: Christopher Nolan for "Inception", Ben Affleck for "The Town"

My Preference: David Fincher

My Guess for Winning: David Fincher

Details: Although I might (at this point) favor "The King's Speech" by just a tiny bit over "The Social Network", I think it was a harder job bringing the story of the founding of Facebook to the screen, and Fincher deserves the credit here.

Best Picture:

The nominees: "Black Swan", "The Fighter", "Inception", "The Kids Are All Right", "The King's Speech", "127 Hours", "The Social Network", "Toy Story 3", "True Grit", "Winter's Bone"

Overlooked in the Category: "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo", "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 1"

My Preference: "The King's Speech"

My Guess for Winning: "The King's Speech"

Details: This could always end up being "The Social Network", but those are the only two possibilities.

Other Picks:

Best Documentary: "Exit Through the Gift Shop" (Hoping for "Restrepo", however)

Best Foreign Language Film: "Dogtooth" (Greece)

Best Animated Film: "Toy Story 3"

Best Visual Effects: "Inception"

Best Original Song: "If I Rise" – Dido – music by A.R. Rahman – from "127 Hours"

Best Musical Score: "The Social Network"

Best Makeup: "The Way Back"

Best Costume Design: "Alice in Wonderland"

Best Art Direction: "Inception"

Best Editing: "The Social Network"

Best Cinematography: "Inception"

I'll talk about the results on Friday in March's edition of The Crystal Ball.