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TALE OF THE TAPE || BY CHRISTOPHER ROSEN || 09 21 2010 2:55 PM

Tale of the Tape: Annette Bening and Julianne Moore Battle for *The Kids Are All Right* Best Actress Nomination

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Fun/sobering fact about pop culture in the 21st century: It's never too early to start thinking about the Oscars. Just yesterday it was **revealed** that summer darlings Annette Bening and Julianne Moore would both be submitted as Best Actress candidates for their performances in *The Kids Are All Right*. But which has the best chance of grabbing a nomination next year? Movieline investigates ahead.

· Role

As Nic, the stern, workaholic wife with a glass of wine permanently affixed to her person, Bening offers shades of her usual type: The no-nonsense fun-killer that she has expertly inhabited in past films like *American Beauty*. Moore plays her wife, Jules, and everything you need to know about her can be found in her laid back first name. She's a Bohemian drifter who winds up falling into the bed of Mark Ruffalo's equally salt of the earth, Paul. Because Bening likes rules and telling people what to do, she's positioned as a pill; despite her adultery, Moore is positioned as someone you'd want to have a beer with. Like voting for president, that matters.

Advantage: Moore.

· Performance

I don't want to stay flip a coin, but: Flip a coin. Moore is really wonderful as Jules and she does well playing both her guilt and the thrill of the cheat. For me, Bening is simply better — she makes Nic into someone you actually feel sympathy for despite a screenplay that does everything in its power to sabotage that — but, to each their own. Besides, we all know an Oscar nomination isn't about the *performance*. What do you think this is?!

Advantage: Push.

· Showy Scene

Moore is given *The Kids Are All Right's* **showcase moment**: a monologue about marriage that is destined to follow her around for the next six months. Bening doesn't have anything reaching that scene, but she is given her fair share of to-the-rafters moments. Her final kiss-off of Paul brings her entire character back around. Still, nothing she does tops Moore speech.

Advantage: Moore.

· Pedigree/Politics

Moore has been nominated four times before (*Boogie Nights*, *The Hours*, *The End of the Affair* and *Far From Heaven*), but she's never won. Likewise, Bening has been nominated three times (*The Grifters*, *American Beauty* and *Being Julia*) without winning. There is always the prevailing feeling that Bening is "due" for an Oscar, but by that same token, isn't Moore? It has been eight years

since her last nomination, so don't be surprised to hear people saying things like, "Moore's time has come" when discussing the nominations next year.

Advantage: Moore.

· **Winner**

There you have it! In a surprising blowout, **Julianne Moore** looks like the clear choice for *The Kids Are All Right's* Best Actress nomination. Sorry, Annette; better luck next year.

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