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## Oscar Watch: It's Annette Bening vs. Julianne Moore for Best Actress

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**Annette Bening and Julianne Moore in the indie hit "The Kids Are All Right."**

Credit: Focus Features

It's been speculated since January, but "The Kids Are All Right" best actress dilemma has finally come to pass. Awards Campaign can confirm that both Annette Bening and Julianne Moore will both be competing

for best actress this upcoming season.

Sadly, this could effectively ruin either actress' shot at winning their first statue. Bening would appear to be a leading candidate in the premier field with tough competition coming from Natalie Portman in "Black Swan" and Nicole Kidman in "Rabbit Hole." It would be a huge surprise if she doesn't make the finale five, but if voters have to split between the two "Kids" co-stars she could find herself on the outside looking in.

You could argue Moore's performance is supporting because the film's final perspective is from Bening's character, but her abundance of screen time makes it a tougher sell. If she was in the supporting race she's have an easier time landing a nod and would likely be competing against Diane Wiest in "Rabbit Hole," Marion Cotillard in "Inception" and Melissa Leo in "The Fighter." Not necessarily an easy race, but there it's much less competitive.

The likely scenario is Moore doesn't make the best actress cut and Bening puts up a valiant fight for her first statue. In the long run, it would be some solace if one of the actresses could take home their first statue and it's not just because of their exemplary performances in "Kids."

Bening has been nominated three times. Twice in the best actress category for "Being Julia" and "American Beauty" and once in supporting for "The Grifters." She actually lost to Hilary Swank twice in 2000 and 2005.

Moore has been recognized four times including twice in the same year for "The Hours" and "Far from Heaven." She was also nominated for "The End of the Affair" and "Boogie Nights." To be frank, Catherine Zeta-Jones did not deserve to win supporting in 2003 over Moore's amazing work in "The Hours," but the "Chicago" star's song and dance routine was hard for voters to ignore (as opposed to a suicidal '50s housewife).

Ironically, Mark Ruffalo, who will compete in the best supporting actor category, may have the best shot out of all the "Kids" stars of winning an Oscar in a relatively weak field. That was hard to imagine when "Kids" first debuted at Sundance earlier this year, but sometimes that's just the way the award season pans out.

Credit to [EW's Dave Karger](#) for reminding everyone and [In Contention](#) for initially reporting this news.

In other bits...

- "The Town" had an incredible weekend at the box office, but could it be an underdog Oscar contender? Reviews were strong, but it's not as thematically deep as "The Departed," the Boston tale it's most often compared to. Still, [Deadline's Pete Hammond](#) has a great write up of the importance of screenings at the massive Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Theater in Beverly Hills and how strongly "The Town" performed there in member screenings over the weekend. Worth a read, but I'm not sure it's really in the race (unless a lot of other contenders fall by the wayside).

- Could "The King's Speech" be peaking to early? Could The Weinstein Company be looking at another "Up in the Air" scenario? This pundit sincerely doubts it, but [Kris Tapley](#) at In Contention warns of those jumping on the prestige bandwagon too quickly. One point he doesn't have time to delve into is that above all, best picture win or not, "Speech" is a great opportunity for TWC to make a tidy profit off the relatively low budget drama.