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Oscars Race Features Tight Competition

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Sunday, the focus of the entertainment world will be on Hollywood, when the stars turn out for the Academy Awards, known as the Oscars. In a year of strong performances, few dare to predict who will win an Oscar.

Hilary Swank is a nominee for best leading actress for her role as a woman boxer in *Million Dollar Baby*. Five years ago, when she was little-known, she earned an Oscar for her starring role in *Boys Don't Cry*. She recently told reporters she is awed and humbled just to get another nomination. "I'm beside myself, and it's certainly not any easier. You're still just as nervous, so I'm just trying to be in the moment and enjoy it and appreciate it," she said.

Hilary Swank's competition for the best actress award will include Annette Bening, which was the case five years ago, as well. Miss Bening was then nominated for her role in the drama *American Beauty*. This time, she is nominated for *Being Julia*, the story of a fading theater star.

Cate Blanchett is a best actress nominee for her co-starring role in *The Aviator*, a tale about eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes. She plays one of Hughes' romantic interests, the actress Katharine Hepburn.

Miss Blanchett will not make any predictions, but complains that she will face an inevitable question at the glamorous ceremony. "When you walk the red carpet and there's a male actor on one side and a male actor on the other side getting asked about their body of work, what's coming up next for them, and the only question you get asked is "what are you wearing?" It is a little bit frustrating," she said.

Among best actor nominees is Leonardo DiCaprio for his role as Howard Hughes in *The Aviator*.

Jamie Foxx is a nominee for his starring role in *Ray*, a film biography about blues legend Ray Charles. And Clint Eastwood is nominee for his role as a fight manager in *Million Dollar Baby*, a film he also directed.

Mr. Eastwood may have the edge in this year's contest for best director, for which he is also nominated, because he recently won the top award from the director's guild for *Million Dollar Baby*. More often than not, the winner of that award also wins the Oscar. But director Martin Scorsese, long passed over for an Oscar, is also a contender for his epic *The Aviator*.

Officials of the motion picture academy, which presents the Oscars, will make just one prediction, that the often sedate show will have more energy this year with its lively first-time host, comedian Chris Rock.

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Preview of 2005 Oscar Nominations

The Aviator, a biography of billionaire businessman Howard Hughes-- leads with 11 nominations; including best picture, best director for Martin Scorsese and best actor for Leonardo DiCaprio. *Finding Neverland* a story about writer J.M. Barrie, the author of novel *Peter Pan*, and *Million Dollar Baby* a film about a female boxer each have seven nominations;

including best picture. The other nominees for best picture are the...

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Movie Academy Presents Scientific, Technical Oscars

The red carpet will be rolled out in Hollywood when the Academy Awards, known as the Oscars, are presented later this month. Oscars for scientific and technical achievements have already been handed out, with a little less fanfare but just as much excitement for the winners. This event was not in Hollywood but in nearby Pasadena, where engineers and scientists who make technical innovations in the movie industry get their acknowledgment. For French Oscar recipients Jean...



By **Mike O'Sullivan**
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Foxx and Swank Win Top Screen Actors Awards

Jamie Foxx, star of the movie Ray, has won the best actor award and Hilary Swank takes best actress for her role in Million Dollar Baby at the 11th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards. Cate Blanchett won the supporting-actress honor for her portrayal of Katherine Hepburn in The Aviator while Morgan Freeman captured the supporting-actor prize for his work on Million Dollar Baby. Other winners at Saturday's ceremony in Los Angeles...

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Swank, Bening Among Best Actress Favorites as Hollywood Gears Up for Oscars

It's Oscar time again, this Sunday, February 27, at the Kodak Theater in Hollywood. The excitement and anticipation are rising as critics and the media are predicting this year's big winners. One of the heavyweights is the drama *Million Dollar Baby*. Veteran actor Clint Eastwood both directed and starred in *Million Dollar Baby*, and he's been nominated for both: as Best Director and Best Actor. Eastwood certainly delivers a tour de force...



By **Penelope Poulou**

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