

## SAG Awards Nominations – Gold Derby by: Tom O’Neil

Hail Meryl and pass the rosary beads! "[Doubt](#)" scored five [Screen Actors Guild Awards nominations](#) — very impressive. With this widespread support among actors, it might have a better shot in the Oscar best-picture race than we thought.

Speaking of Oscars, the SAG noms are usually our best tea leaves in the acting slots. Therefore, today's list is great news for low-profile contenders who needed a push like Richard Jenkins ("The Visitor"), Melissa Leo ("Frozen River") and Dev Patel ("[Slumdog Millionaire](#)"). But beware: those are the type of contenders who get replaced at the Academy Awards by superstars. Not all, but some.

In case you're wondering, I scored 16 out of 20 guesses when [predicting](#) today's SAG Award nominations. The two awards usually agree on 15 to 19 of the 20 nominees for best solo performances. Below, more detailed reax to the film races.

### **BEST ENSEMBLE**

"The Curious Case of Benjamin Button"

"Doubt"

"[Frost/Nixon](#)"

"[Milk](#)"

"Slumdog Millionaire"

Too many pundits carry on (and on!) about this category being the equivalent to best picture at the Oscars. It's not. Yes, it tattled on the upsets of "Crash" and "Shakespeare in Love" early on and last year the winner here corresponded to top Oscar champ "No Country for Old Men." But, over all, this SAG winner agreed with the Oscar best-pic champ only six times in 13 years. Last year "No Country" was the only SAG ensemble rival that got nominated for best pic. The other four contenders were misfires: "3:10 to Yuma," "Into the Wild," "Hairspray," "American Gangster."

This year I think four of the five will match up. "Doubt" (a magnificent ensemble acting piece) will probably get bumped from Oscar's best-pic race by, say, "The Dark Knight" (more notable for one breakthrough performance by Heath Ledger rather than a group wow).

### **BEST ACTOR**

Richard Jenkins, "The Visitor"

Frank Langella, "Frost/Nixon"

Sean Penn, "Milk"

Brad Pitt, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button"

Mickey Rourke, "The Wrestler"

True to form, SAG opted for an obscure actor's actor (Jenkins) over superstar Clint Eastwood ("Gran Torino"), as I predicted it would, but there's one surprise here. Voters also snubbed a

superstar who's been generously nominated in the past: Leo DiCaprio, who gives the most animated, impassioned performance of his career in "Revolutionary Road." Curiously, voters preferred the quiet, reserved emoting of a different superstar: Brad Pitt ("Curious Case of Benjamin Button"). Considering that the mother of his children will also be attending, the SAG Awards hail both halves of Brangelina.

### **BEST ACTRESS**

Anne Hathaway, "Rachel Getting Married"  
Angelina Jolie, "Changeling"  
Melissa Leo, "Frozen River"  
Meryl Streep, "Doubt"  
Kate Winslet, "Revolutionary Road"

No Cate Blanchett, who was a double nominee last year! I predicted that would happen, but I thought she'd be bumped by art-house contender Sally Hawkins ("Happy-Go-Lucky"). Instead, artsy rival Melissa Leo ("Frozen River") got in. Yes, SAG frequently likes to hail lesser-known veterans like Leo, but her nomination is still a surpr it's for a little indie film that was not as widely viewed as "Changeling" or "Doubt." Shrewdly, it ended up benefiting from an early release. Also snubbed here: Kristin Scott Thomas ("I've Loved You So Long").

### **BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR**

Josh Brolin, "Milk"  
Robert Downey Jr., "Tropic Thunder"  
Philip Seymour Hoffman, "Doubt"  
Heath Ledger, "The Dark Knight"  
Dev Patel, "Slumdog Millionaire"

Uh-oh! Can the Joker still get the last laugh? All three of the chief threats to Heath Ledger got nommed: Brolin and Downey plus a contender who got snubbed at the Golden Globes: Patel. And Hoffman's here giving, like Patel, a lead performance in this supporting slot, often a shrewd Oscar move. Beware: this race isn't a slam-dunk, shoo-in for Ledger.

### **BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS**

Amy Adams, "Doubt"  
Penelope Cruz, "Vicky Cristina Barcelona"  
Viola Davis, "Doubt"  
Taraji P. Henson, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button"  
Kate Winslet, "The Reader"

Marisa Tomei ("The Wrestler") snubbed! That's surprising considering that she's been winning lots of film critics' awards lately. And I was wrong about my Debra Winger ("Rachel Getting Married") hunch. Dagnabbit!

[http://goldderby.latimes.com/awards\\_goldderby/2008/12/sag-nominations.html](http://goldderby.latimes.com/awards_goldderby/2008/12/sag-nominations.html)