

Ever Wonder How ACM Awards Voting Works?

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Reba hosts the 54th ACM Awards on Sunday night April 7th live on CBS from Las Vegas. There will be presenters, award presentations, and acceptance speeches. But how DO they pick the winners?

Thursday, April 04, 2019 11:36 a.m.

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Every ACM award handed out Sunday night is the culmination of a 15 month process. First, the eligibility period for the 2019 ACM Awards ran from January 1st until December 31st, 2018.

Criteria can vary over the categories, but basically the top performers in radio airplay, chart placement, streaming, and albums sold over the eligibility period will be the nominees. The charts used are Country Aircheck's Mediabase chart and the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart which considers not only airplay, but streaming and sales.

How the Voting Process Works

Professional members of the Academy of Country Music do the voting over three rounds of ballots. In the first round, they submit one nomination in each category. A panel steps in to narrow down specialized categories like songwriting. The top 20 in votes then go before a review committee to ensure all criteria are met. The top 20 must also have reached at least 2% of the votes for that category.

The second round is where the nominees are decided. Each voting ACM member casts up to two votes in each category. The five highest vote-getters in each category will be named official nominees. It is possible to arrive at less than five nominees in a category if eligibility requirements don't allow it. But there will never be less than three.

In the third and final round, the voting ACM members vote once in each category. Most votes wins. It is possible to have a tie. In that case all tied parties win.

Who are the Members of the Academy?

Academy of Country Music members had to apply for the privilege. According to the

ACM website

, those who apply must "derive a significant amount of their income directly from country music; however, admission to membership is subject to the complete discretion of the ACM Board of Directors." Those accepted include artists, songwriters, producers, radio personalities, among other niches of the industry. Then they have to keep up with their \$75 annual dues.



About the Trophy

The 'hat' trophy was created in 1968. The sleeker version you see Reba holding above was adopted in 2003. Currently, a company called Society Awards in New York City manufactures the 'hat'. Their statuettes have also been seen on the Emmy Awards, the Golden Globes, American Music Awards, BET Awards, Billboard Music Awards, MTV Movie Awards, MTV Video Awards, Dancing With the Stars, The ESPY's, and more. They also created the first award for 'The Voice' in 2013.

Controversy

During an eight year experiment, fans could vote for Entertainer of the Year, New Female Artist of the Year, New Male Artist of the Year, and New Duo or Group of the Year. That ended in 2016 over rifts between artists about ballot stuffing encouragement tactics. Kenny Chesney, for instance, won the first fan vote in 2008 and went on to criticize the process as a marketing ploy that rewarded artists for "seeing how hard you can push people's buttons on the Internet," rather than professional acknowledgement for hard work.

You may not agree with all the winner announcements on Sunday, but now you have a little insight into why. But if your favorites do win, know that it was well deserved.