

PAUL

Rep. (R-Tex.) Ron Paul

THE SKINNY: The libertarian from Texas placed second in the New Hampshire caucus and third in Iowa. Paul's supporters say he has started a "revolution" amongst young voters by addressing foreign policy issues and by cautioning lawmakers to stay away from Iran.

PROPS FOR: Being persistent (he's been in this race three times) and thoughtfully questioning the role of big government in American society.

WHY THE HATERS HATE: Paul attracts less attention from the media than other candidates and gets less time to speak during debates. Cynics say he can't get enough votes to win the bid. He also takes hardline stances on immigration and homosexuality.

IA: 21% NH: 23% SC: 13%



THE KEY
SOUTH CAROLINA
All of these guys really wanted to win the South Carolina primary election. But Newt Gingrich, amidst a newly broken sex scandal, rose to the top, winning by a wide margin. The victory is bound to propel him to take Florida next, as it has with most candidates who win in the South Carolina. From 1980 to 2008, the Republican candidate who won South Carolina has also won the nomination from the party. The state has helped to elect Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Geroge Bush to the United States presidency. Now Romney will have to fight an uphill battle to take votes from the Gingrich camp.



SANTORUM

Frm. Sen. (R-Penn.) Rick Santorum

THE SKINNY: The former Senator from Pennsylvania has built a campaign for the 2012 primaries based almost solely on bringing the United States back to God. He hadn't garnished much media attention until he placed first in the Iowa polls.

PROPS FOR: Bringing sweatervests to the forefront of couture popularity and not quitting the race after a brutal glitter bombing by protesters.

WHY THE HATERS HATE: He's been criticized for racist remarks (did he say *black* people or *blah* people?) during speeches. There is also an unfortunate linkage between his last name and something very, very nasty. Google it.

IA: 24.6% NH: 15% SC: 17%

BET YOU DIDN'T SEE THIS COMING

Paul, Gingrich and Santorum and Romney have battled for the limelight during the 2012 GOP Presidential Primary season. Tied neck in neck, they all head to Florida for the next round of voting.



GINGRICH

Frm. Speaker of the House (R-Ga.) Newt Gingrich

THE SKINNY: As former speaker of the house, Gingrich possesses great skill over words and rhetoric. He has used his sharp tongue to get his socially and economically conservative agenda over to other candidates and the press.

PROPS FOR: Beating the pants out of Romney in South Carolina (Santorum barely beat him in Iowa) and calling Romney out for his track record at Bain Capital.

WHY THE HATERS HATE: Gingrich has been accused of cheating on his wife and taking money from Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae while the companies were being bailed out by the government.

IA: 13% NH: 9% SC: 40%

Until last week, it seemed as if Mitt Romney, former Governor of Massachusetts, was destined to receive the 2012 GOP bid for president.

He's better funded than any of his three competitors and he weilds more political support. He also received more time to speak during debates than other candidates.

That's why many people were probably surprised when Romney beat former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum by a measly eight votes in the Iowa caucus.

They were even more surprised when Santorum was announced the winner two weeks later after the results of a recount were announced.

And Newt Gingrich pummelled Romney in the South Carolina polls Saturday, beating him by a margin of 14 percent.

Long story short: if Romney wasn't worried about getting the bid at the beginning of the campaign, he is now.

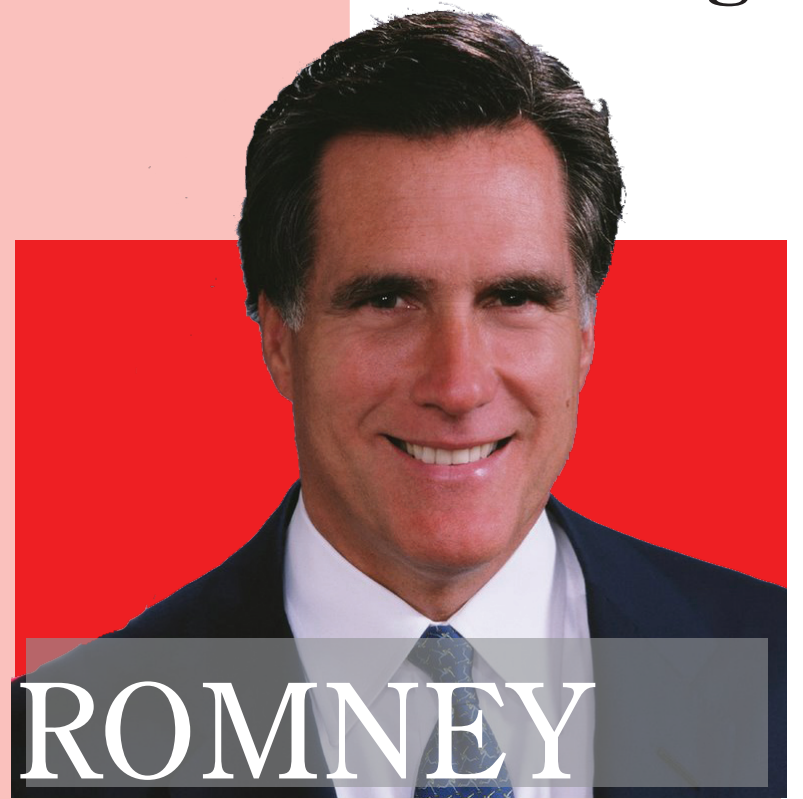
Now Gingrich is poised to take the lead (if he doesn't already have it) with strong support in Florida.

If the past repeats itself, voters can expect vicious super-PAC ads to be released from all four of these candidates' camps.

This race is heating up, and Romney is in the hot seat. After the contest in Florida, the American public will find out if Gingrich is another flash in the pan or if he really has what it takes to beat Romney.

CHRIS COLLINS
EDITOR IN CHIEF

PHOTOS COURTESY



ROMNEY

Frm. Gov. of Massachusetts Mitt Romney

THE SKINNY: Mitt Romney is the best funded and politically-connected of the four candidates. He amassed a small fortune as the head of Bain Capital, though the company has proved to be Romney's albatross during the race.

PROPS FOR: Being a *very* successful businessman and actually implementing public healthcare in Massachusetts.

WHY THE HATERS HATE: Romney has flip-flopped on important issues such as healthcare, citizenship for illegal aliens and even having knowledge of the content of his own super-PAC ads. And until he lost in South Carolina, Romney had even flip-flopped about whether he would release his tax returns.

IA: 24.5% NH: 39% SC: 28%

SEE YA

Huntsman and Bachmann just didn't have what it takes to last through the GOP primaries.



Rep. (R-Minn) Michelle Bachmann

Bachmann never made much of a splash in the 2012 primary race. She dropped out of the contest after a poor showing in Iowa.

IA: 5% NH: N/A SC: N/A



Frm. Gov. John Huntsman

Huntsman has served in four presidential administrations, but speaking fluent Mandarin Chinese couldn't help him win in this contest.

IA: 0.6% NH: 17% SC: N/A