

Here's Why Rick Santorum Still Has Hope in Iowa

Republican presidential candidate former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum knows what it takes to win the Iowa Republican Caucus.

Having won the first-in-the-nation nominating contest in 2012, staging a stunning “from out of nowhere” win that nearly catapulted him to the GOP nomination, he’s stuck to essentially the same playbook in 2016. And because of how “under the radar” his campaign has been, he still holds out hope for a Caucus Night surprise.

Monday, he explained his ground game to nationally syndicated talk radio host Hugh Hewitt:

“Well, there’s good news and bad news about that. The good news about it is expectations are really low. And as you know, Hugh, in politics, and primaries in particular, succeeding expectations is almost as important as winning and losing. And so we have really low expectations, which is a positive for us.

“And the bad news is that obviously when your expectations are low, you’ve got a little tougher job going out to visit people. I’m sitting here at a Hardee’s in Orange City, Iowa, and talking to a bunch of folks here, and you know, we’re having some good success in going through and talking about other candidates.

“I was at a house party in Sac City and had a hundred people there. And we’re signing up our caucus captains. We’re actually ahead of our pace in signing up caucus captains, people who will go to the caucus and speak on our behalf, from where we were four years ago.

"So we're, you know, we're just out here, I'm here every day, just building out the network. And I think we're going to see another surprise again. I have no doubt that we're going to start, in the next week or two, start creeping up a little bit and get that momentum when it matters."

Hewitt then asked Santorum to expound upon the importance of being well-liked by Iowa voters in a caucus environment. Santorum responded that campaign in Iowa is "hand-to-hand combat," and that building relationships is vital:

"I was here with a dozen guys at a Hardee's talking, and having a little bit of a jabber, you know, just a little fun with everybody. And it's not just talking about issues. It's also sort of just having, just sort of building a little bit of rapport and relationship."

"You don't do that when you speak to a thousand people, or even a few hundred people, and then you give your speech and answer a question or two and walk off. I mean, we're doing house parties. We're doing, you know, events where there's relationships built, and there's a connection made."

"I told a story, I'll tell you a story of what happened just four days ago in Missouri Valley, which is in the western part of Iowa near Omaha. And I was at a Pizza Ranch. We had a dozen people there talking about helping us out there in Harrison County, and a woman raised her hand and said, 'You know, I was a caucus captain for you four years ago, and you know, I went there, and you gave me a little sheet to read, and I walked in, and there were people for this candidate and that candidate, and so when they asked people if there was anybody there to speak, it was just you and Mitt Romney were the only two people that had people represented there. And I got up and read what you, and (then) I talked about meeting you and talking to you, and I got a little emotional, because I really like you. And in the end, you got every vote but one

in the room.'"

"I just share that with you that it's a much more dynamic process than people just showing up. It's not New Hampshire. People don't just show up and vote throughout the day. They go to a caucus, they talk to their neighbors, and if you've had that presence and you develop those relationships, it matters."

To round out the interview, Santorum described the caucus voting process in general terms, and then weighed in on the impact Donald Trump's personality will have on the Iowa Republican Caucus. He also discussed the two most important topics he said he's heard about while talking with Iowans: national security and Second Amendment rights.