

Presidential Prognostication: Keep an Eye on New Hampshire

We only got three new polls in the final days before Christmas, and none since, but those three polls—combined with the others over the past 30 months—paint a very interesting picture in the early voting states.

In Iowa, it would appear there is now a two-man race with Ted Cruz and Donald Trump now in a statistical dead heat. In the coming days, with both candidates returning to campaign in the state, it will be interesting to see how the numbers change, if at all.

In New Hampshire, Trump is running away with things while the conservatives and establishment Republicans seem to have a traffic jam in each of their respective lanes. In all, four candidates are now statistically tied for second, followed by four more who would need only the slightest bump in support to shoot toward the top.

Meanwhile, in South Carolina, the voters there seem to be closely mirroring what most of the national polls are showing. Trump's lead there has shrunk a tiny bit, but his support is still more than the next two candidates—Cruz and Marco Rubio—combined.

This is the last time we will use 30-day polling averages. Once we enter January, we will switch to 15-day averages. Real Clear Politics uses a similar polling average, and there is very little difference between the two sets of numbers.

IOWA

The newest poll in Iowa shows a straight-up tie between Trump and Cruz. Their 30-day averages don't dispute that assessment, either:

1. Ted Cruz
2. Donald Trump
3. Marco Rubio
4. Ben Carson
5. Jeb Bush
6. Rand Paul
7. Carly Fiorina
8. Mike Huckabee
9. Chris Christie
10. John Kasich
11. Rick Santorum
12. George Pataki

One week after announcing he was ramping up his campaign efforts in Iowa, Chris Christie's polling average has dropped and he's been passed up by Mike Huckabee. Carly Fiorina and Rand Paul each lost a fraction of a point this week. Statistically, they are all within a point of fifth place.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the latest poll in New Hampshire, Trump's support has dropped off substantially, but this is a one-off poll that doesn't have any history to indicate how the current numbers compare to previous polls. Meanwhile, the same poll has boosted Christie and John Kasich:

1. Donald Trump
2. Marco Rubio

- 3-t. Ted Cruz
- 3-t. Chris Christie
- 5. John Kasich
- 6. Jeb Bush
- 7. Ben Carson
- 8. Carly Fiorina
- 9. Rand Paul
- 10. Mike Huckabee
- 11-t. Rick Santorum
- 11-t. George Pataki

With a margin of error of plus-or-minus 4.5 points, second through ninth place are statistically within a fraction of a point of each other. With the field so divided, it seems unlikely anyone will catch up with Trump, if the primary were held today.

SOUTH CAROLINA

In South Carolina, the 30-day numbers haven't changed at all:

- 1. Donald Trump
- 2. Ted Cruz
- 3. Marco Rubio
- 4. Ben Carson
- 5. Jeb Bush
- 6-t. Rand Paul
- 6-t. Chris Christie

8. Carly Fiorina
9. Mike Huckabee
10. John Kasich
11. Rick Santorum
12. George Pataki

But, these numbers very closely mirror what we're seeing nationally for all of the candidates, with only a couple of exceptions. Due to the larger sample size, the national numbers might be more indicative of the real story in South Carolina.

COMBINED AVERAGE

Very little has changed in the combined 30-day averages for the first three early voting states:

1. Donald Trump
2. Ted Cruz
3. Marco Rubio
4. Ben Carson
5. Jeb Bush
6. Chris Christie
7. John Kasich
8. Carly Fiorina
9. Rand Paul
10. Mike Huckabee
11. Rick Santorum

12. George Pataki

NATIONAL

With a new national poll continuing to show Trump holds a commanding lead over the rest of the field—the combined averages of fourth through 12th place is less than his—it's difficult to argue that he's not the consensus pick of Republicans nationally:

1. Donald Trump
2. Ted Cruz
3. Marco Rubio
4. Ben Carson
5. Jeb Bush
6. Chris Christie
7. Carly Fiorina
8. Rand Paul
9. John Kasich
10. Mike Huckabee
11. Rick Santorum
12. George Pataki