



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 8, 2020

New Hampshire Democrat Debate: It's Over for Uncle Joe

For former Vice President Joe Biden it was over even before it got started. At the beginning of the contest at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire, Friday night, [Biden was asked](#) by moderator George Stephanopoulos of ABC News what Iowa voters “missed” by giving him, the former front runner, a fourth place finish behind Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg. Biden responded, “They didn’t miss anything.... I took a hit in Iowa and I’ll probably take a hit here.”



And then he added that the race isn’t over: “But no matter what, I’m still in this.”

He’s in it until his funding stops.

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Biden needed a miracle in Manchester to keep his chances alive. He needed to pull a rabbit out of the hat. He needed some magic. Instead, he pitched himself as the candidate with past experience in politics, touting some of his accomplishments during his nearly five decades in Washington. One of the “twinnings” in Iowa, Pete Buttigieg, scored big against Biden when he said that the “biggest risk we could take at a time like this would be to go up against the fundamentally new challenge [of Trump] by trying to fall back on the familiar.”

For all intents and purposes that ended Biden’s bid. The Iowa contest was not a fluke. It was not a “one-off” result that would be righted by a big turnaround in Friday’s debate. It showed instead Biden’s vulnerability that his name recognition has kept hidden all these months. He is no longer the “most electable” candidate in the race. A poor showing on Tuesday should seal his fate.

Chris Cillizza, CNN’s editor-at-large, agrees. He noted on Saturday morning that Buttigieg has “the most momentum in the race ... that nothing that happened over the two-plus hours at Saint Anselm College will change that dynamic.”

On the other hand, wrote Cillizza, “the former vice president needed something in this debate to change his trajectory. I’m not sure he got it.” Added Cillizza, Biden “needed to be more forceful and more on the attack; he was both although [his] attempts at forcefulness often came across to me as plain old yelling.”

And when Biden recited his list of past accomplishments, Cillizza noted that “debates (and races) are rarely won by focusing on the past.”

All of which keeps the candidate not on stage in the driver’s seat. As this writer has repeatedly opined, Michael Bloomberg’s strategy, being implemented by his bottomless checkbook, is to reduce Biden’s formerly apparently insurmountable lead in the polls to the point where no one wins on the first ballot in Milwaukee (the site of the Democrat Party’s national convention) in July. Bloomberg will then start redeeming his “chits” (hat tip to Liz Peek for that insight) that he has built up over the years through his funding of numerous Democrat candidates (and now delegates).



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For now the Democrat field has been cut to three: Buttigieg, Sanders, and Bloomberg.

Photo of Joe Biden: AP Images

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