



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on March 7, 2012

Romney's 6 Wins (Out of 10) on Super Tuesday May Mean Brokered Convention

GOP frontrunner Mitt Romney won a majority of the 10 "Super Tuesday" presidential primary and caucus states March 6, though the unconvincing victory has many pundits wondering when Romney will be able to land the "knockout" blow against his rivals. If Romney does not garner the requisite 1,144 delegates needed to clinch the nomination by the time Republicans meet in Tampa during the week of August 27, the result may be a "brokered" convention. This occurs when no candidate is nominated following the first ballot, and delegates previously pledged to a single candidate are released to switch their votes to other candidates.



This often involves deal making, in which one candidate will ask his delegates to vote for a rival in return for certain concessions, such as changes to the party's platform or for influence on the selection of the vice presidential candidate. The last time our nation experienced a brokered convention was the 1952 Democratic Convention, at which Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson secured the nomination on the third ballot. Stevenson was defeated by General Dwight Eisenhower in the general election.

The former Massachusetts Governor [won](#) six of the 10 "Super Tuesday" primary and caucus states, though former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum pulled out wins in Tennessee, North Dakota, and Oklahoma; and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich won his home state of Georgia. Romney was able to chalk up wins in his home state of Massachusetts, a narrow 38 percent to 37 percent victory over Santorum in Ohio, as well as victories in Alaska, heavily Mormon Idaho, Vermont, and Virginia (the latter a 60-40 victory where only Romney and Texas Congressman Ron Paul were on the ballot).

Romney's narrow win over Santorum in Ohio had been the media focus for more than a week, even though Santorum faced ballot access issues in some of the congressional districts. Romney will win a vast majority of Ohio's 66 delegates, largely because the Santorum campaign failed to qualify in some districts. National political observers had cast Ohio as a "battleground" state that was a must-win for both Romney and Santorum, but it's unclear if Ohio was a bellwether for the nation.

After the March 6 primaries, Romney maintains a [narrow majority](#) among the delegates already awarded, though he has only about a third of the 1,144 delegates needed for a majority in the GOP June national convention in Tampa.

The primary results thus far do leave open the possibility of a brokered convention where no one candidate arrives in Tampa in June with a clear majority of delegates. Romney has won consistently in the Northeast, the far west and states with a large Mormon population (Romney is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints — "Mormon"). But Romney has failed to garner significant



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wins in the upper Midwest (which have been consistently won by Santorum) and in the deep South (Gingrich has won both South Carolina and Georgia handily).

Moreover, a majority of Republicans consistently vote against Romney in primaries; Romney won a majority in only three of his six “Super Tuesday” wins. Part of Romney’s inability to win over a majority of GOP primary voters is due to the four-way nature of the race, and the impact of Ron Paul. Paul has yet to win a state outright, but on Super Tuesday placed second in three states and garnered more than 20 percent of the vote in four states. And Paul continued to accrue delegates, along with Romney’s other rivals, and Paul has especially cut into Romney’s organizational edge in caucus states and states — such as Virginia — where Romney’s other rivals failed to get on the ballot.

Romney and his rivals will [now head off to](#) caucuses in Kansas (March 10) and Alabama, Hawaii, and Mississippi (March 13). With the exception of Hawaii, Romney will be competing in geographical areas where he is expected to fare poorly; Santorum is a favorite in Midwestern Kansas, and Gingrich is expected to poll well in the deep South’s Alabama and Mississippi. Romney could actually lose four of the next five states on the calendar; Missouri’s March 17 caucus may cap an upcoming Romney losing streak (Santorum had already won a non-binding Missouri caucus in February).

Photo: Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney greets supporters after voting in the Massachusetts Primary in Belmont, Mass., Tuesday, March 6, 2012.



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