

ELECTION 2008: SUPER TUESDAY PRIMARIES AND CAUCUSES

ANALYSIS

On Super Tuesday, a 'win' depends on how you look at it

By MICHAEL TACKETT
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — As a former president might put it, maybe it depends on what the definition of "win" is.

Was it winning states or winning delegates? Was it coming closer than expected and winning delegates all the same? Was it losing where a candidate was expected to win or winning where a candidate was expected to lose?

One clear verdict: the near-national primary of Super Tuesday provided candidates in both parties with enough ammunition to make plausible claims they had done well enough to move on to the next round of primaries. And make claims they did.

The breadth of the race that stretched from Alaska to Massachusetts, and the limited time to campaign in any one place, favored the better known candidates in both parties, Sen. Hillary Clinton and Sen. John McCain, with McCain gaining

significantly more advantage over his rivals than Clinton did over Sen. Barack Obama.

McCain continued his march toward the nomination, which, if not inevitable, appears more likely than not. Mike Huckabee had a strong run in the South, winning several states and possibly burnishing his credentials as a running mate. Mitt Romney added wins where expected, but was battling McCain to win California. He vowed to go forward.

On the Democratic side, the race between Clinton and Obama has become in many ways a contest between obligation and enthusiasm. A long fight would not seem to be helpful to the Democrats if the Republican race ends earlier, but this is an unusual year with an unusual level of interest.

Clinton's crowds seem to come out of duty to support her barrier-breaking candidacy, and loyalty to the family that is near royalty in the Democratic Party. Obama's supporters come out with energy, by the tens of

thousands, even in unlikely places for a Democrat to be a draw, such as the 15,000 who surged to his rally in Boise, Idaho. Obama has lit a prairie fire.

The two powerful, emotional pulls are framing the Democratic race, but without a durable trend. Sometimes obligation wins, sometimes enthusiasm.

The race for the Republican nomination for president is long on obligation. It is a central conceit of the campaign of McCain, who had gone into Super Tuesday hoping to all but close out the GOP contest. Now, instead of working to shore up his party, he has to think about upcoming contests.

Even some Republicans concede that they are more interested in watching the Democratic race play out.

"I use expectation vs. aspiration," said Don Sipple, a California-based GOP consultant. "Obama, beyond the obvious attraction of him as a person, his campaign is packed with symbols that appeal to

aspirational voters. He's the ultimate opportunity candidate, whereas you have an expectation of Hillary as a workmanlike, less than romantic figure.

"Somebody soars, and somebody walks," he said.

Enthusiasm often gets more attention. The cameras love the lusty cheers and energy. But obligation means following through, and that can win the day.

Obligation can also lead to commitment. Women voters demonstrated in states across the county a decided preference for Clinton, and they turned out in numbers far greater than males.

Latino voters and lower-income workers continued to show fealty to Clinton, and secured her victory in New Jersey, among others.

Black voters, perhaps with obligation and enthusiasm in equal measure, continue to provide Obama with a firewall of support, and he wins states where blacks represent a significant portion of the population.



Ryan Hennessey, 21, finishes filling out her ballot as she and other students at CSU-Monterey Bay vote in the school's student activity area on Tuesday.

ORVILLE MYERS/The Herald

Ballot counting will be watched into wee hours

By JIM JOHNSON
Herald Salinas Bureau

Even after years of working for and observing elections, Stephanie Loose barely contained her enthusiasm Super Tuesday as she watched a stream of voters flow through the polls at St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church in Salinas.

"This is great," the veteran League of Women Voters poll worker said, pointing out that several voters brought their children with them. "I'm absolutely thrilled there are this many people."

At the Monterey County elections department, Registrar of Voters Linda Tulett watched as voters lined the front counter late into the evening in an attempt to cast their presidential primary ballots.

It was so busy at county polling places that election officials didn't officially close until about 8:30 p.m., which delayed reporting absentee ballot results until after 9 p.m.

Because of the county's reliance on paper ballots, Tulett said, the unofficial final results wouldn't likely be ready until 3 a.m.

As the polls closed, Tulett was sticking to her prediction of a more than 60 percent voter turnout in the county, which appeared to be as engaged as the state was expected to be.

A record 9 million Californians were expected to cast ballots Tuesday after the state moved up its primary four months to increase its influence on selection of presidential candidates.

For the first time, a county election observer panel is watching various aspects of the electoral process, such as

procedures at the polls and vote counting, as well as post-election canvassing.

Loose, a panelist, checked out a number of the polling places, noting details such as signs and voter check-in procedures. But she said the panel's best work might come well after the election when the panelists meet to compare notes.

Members of the anti-electronic voting group SAVElections, led by Valerie Lane, were among those who participated in the panel's activities, stopping by polling places to watch the voting process before arriving at county elections headquarters for the lengthy vote-counting process.

Lane said voting was relatively smooth at the polls she visited, except for a polling site switch in Carmel that left voters confused about where they should cast their ballots.

SAVElections' Brian Rothenberger sat outside a glass window at the county elections office, watching the tallies on a computer monitor, but Tulett rejected a request by Green Party representative Nancy Pratt to videotape the counting process.

Pratt, a member of SAVElections, argued that the secretary of state's provisional recertification of touch-screen voting machines allowed for such access, but Tulett wouldn't budge. Pratt said she would remain at the elections office until the last ballot was counted.

A representative from the secretary of state's office showed up to watch the county's polling procedures, said Tulett.

Jim Johnson can be reached at 753-6753 or johnson@montereyherald.com.

Campaign

From page A1

Democratic delegates with a five-to-three advantage over Obama in Monterey County. In the fight for Republican delegates, McCain led Romney by more than a two-to-one margin.

In the competition that counted the most, the Arizona senator had 522 delegates, more than 40 percent of the 1,191 needed for the nomination — and far ahead of his rivals.

Even so, Romney and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee said they were staying in the race.

Neither Clinton nor Obama proclaimed overall victory on a Super Tuesday that sprawled across 23 states, and with good reason. Obama won 12 states and Clinton eight plus American Samoa. But with victories in New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts, the former first lady led in the early tabulation of Super Tuesday delegates.

Shortly after 1 a.m. EST, winners were still to be declared in Missouri, New Mexico and Alaska.

"I look forward to continuing our campaign and our debate about how to leave this country better off for the next generation," said the former first lady, looking ahead to the primaries and caucuses yet to come.

Obama was in Chicago, where he told a noisy election night rally, "Our time has come. Our movement is real. And change is coming to America."

Polling place interviews with voters suggested subtle shifts in the political landscape.

For the first time this year, McCain ran first in a few states among self-identified Republicans. As usual, he was running strongly among independents. Romney was getting the votes of about four in 10 people who described themselves as conservative. McCain was winning about one-third of that group, and Huckabee about one in five.

Overall, Clinton was winning only a slight edge among women and white voters, groups that she had won handily in earlier contests, according to preliminary results from interviews with voters in 16 states leaving polling places.

Obama was collecting the overwhelming majority of votes cast by blacks — a factor in victories in Alabama and Georgia.

Clinton's continued strong appeal among Hispanics — she was winning nearly six in 10 of their votes — was a big factor in her California triumph, and in her victory in Arizona, too.

McCain, the early Republican front-runner whose campaign nearly unraveled six months ago, won in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Missouri,

Delaware and his home state of Arizona — each of them winner-take-all primaries. He also pocketed victories in Oklahoma and Illinois.

Huckabee, the former governor of Arkansas, won a series of Bible Belt victories, in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee as well as his own home state. He also triumphed at the Republican West Virginia convention, and told The Associated Press in an interview he would campaign on. "The one way you can't win a race is to quit it, and until somebody beats me, I'm going to answer the bell for every round of this fight," he said.

Romney won a home state victory in Massachusetts. He also took Utah, where fellow Mormons supported his candidacy. His superior organization produced caucus victories in North Dakota, Montana, Minnesota and Colorado, and he, too, breathed defiance. "We're going to go all the way to the convention. We're going to win this thing," he told supporters in Boston.

Democrats played out a historic struggle between two senators: Clinton, seeking to become the first female president, and Obama, hoping to become the first black to win the White House.

Clinton won at home in New York as well as in California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Arizona and Arkansas, where she was first lady for more than a decade. She also won the caucuses in American Samoa.

Obama won Connecticut, Georgia, Alabama, Delaware, Utah and his home state of Illinois. He prevailed in caucuses in North Dakota, Minnesota, Kansas, Idaho, Alaska and Colorado.

After an early series of low-delegate, single-state contests, Super Tuesday was anything but small — its primaries and caucuses were spread across nearly half the country in the most wide-open presidential campaign in memory.

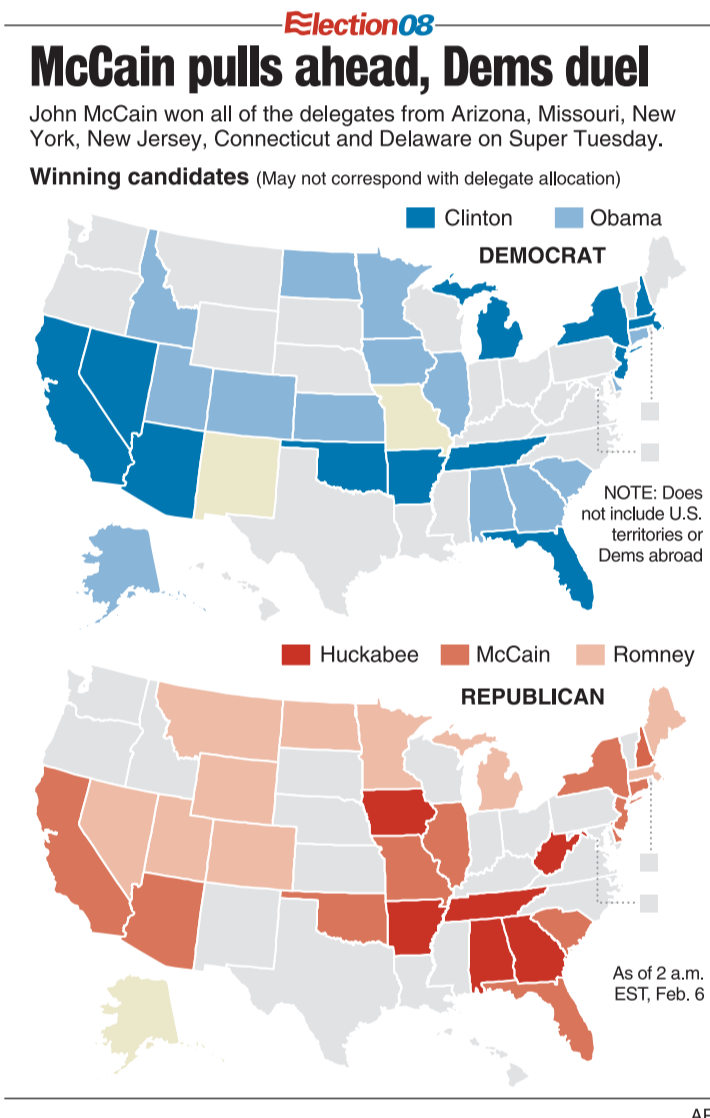
The result was a double-barreled set of races, Obama and Clinton fighting for delegates as well as bragging rights in individual states, the Republicans doing the same.

The allocation of delegates lagged the vote count by hours. That was particularly true for the Democrats, who divided theirs roughly in proportion to the popular vote.

Nine of the Republican contests were winner take all, and that was where McCain piled up his lead.

The Arizona senator had 522 delegates, to 223 for Romney and 142 for Huckabee. It takes 1,191 to clinch the presidential nomination at next summer's convention in St. Paul, Minn.

Overall, Clinton had 656 delegates to 559 for Obama, out of the 2,025 needed to secure victory at the party convention in



Denver. Clinton's advantage is partly due to her lead among so-called superdelegates, members of Congress and other party leaders who are not selected in primaries and caucuses — and who are also free to change their minds.

Alabama and Georgia gave Obama three straight Southern triumphs. Like last month's win in South Carolina, they were powered by black votes.

Democrats and Republicans alike said the economy was their most important issue. Democrats said the war in Iraq ranked second and health care third. Republican primary voters said immigration was second most important after the economy, followed by the war in Iraq.

The survey was conducted in 16 states by Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International for The Associated Press and television networks.

Already, the campaigns were looking ahead to Feb. 9 contests in Louisiana, Nebraska and Washington state and Feb. 12 primaries in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. And increasingly, it looked like the Democrats' historic race between a woman and a black man would go into early spring, possibly longer.

The de facto national primary was the culmination of a relentless campaign that moved into overdrive during Christmas week.

After a brief rest for the holiday, the candidates flew back to Iowa on Dec. 26 for a final stretch of campaigning before the state's caucuses offered the

first test of the election year. New Hampshire's traditional first-in-the-nation primary followed a few days later, then a seemingly endless series of campaign days interspersed by debates and a handful of primaries and caucuses.

Along the way, the poorest performers dropped out: Democratic Sens. Joe Biden and Chris Dodd, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson and Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio; and Republican Reps. Duncan Hunter and Tom Tancredo, and former Tennessee Sen. Fred Thompson.

Former Sen. John Edwards pulled out of the Democratic race last week, and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani left the Republican field.

Edwards offered no endorsement as he exited, instead leaving Obama and Clinton to vie for help from his fundraisers and supporters.

Giuliani quit the race and backed McCain in the same breath, clearing the way for the Westerner in New York and New Jersey.

Giuliani's departure also made it possible for California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to back McCain. Schwarzenegger said he would not have done so as long as the former mayor was in the race.

Obama and Clinton spent an estimated \$20 million combined to advertise on television in the Feb 5 states.

Obama spent \$11 million, running ads in 18 of the 22 states with Democratic contests. Clinton ran ads in 17, for a total of \$9 million.

Voters

From page A1

Silva, 21.

At the Carmel Mission, voters said the war in Iraq and the economy are the primary issues facing America.

"The most important issue right now is the war, and getting out in a timely and sane manner," said Robert Zechick, a 57-year old marketing consultant from Carmel.

"The economy needs a strong pump in the arm, but that will come from a positive approach to the war," Zechick said.

Marian Hawthorne, an administrative assistant from Carmel, said the economy and health care are the most important issues to her in this election.

"And the war too, how could I forget that?" Hawthorne said.

At the polling place in St. Ansgar's Church in Salinas, Letha Patmon said she was casting her vote for change and for Sen. Barack Obama, saying that her primary issues are the war in Iraq and the economy.

"Everybody I know is on the bandwagon," she said. "People want change from the situation we're in right now."

The economy was Bryan Hawk's top concern. Hawk, an agricultural administrator who voted at St. Ansgar's, said Republican Mitt Romney can turn the economy around.

"I like what he did in Massachusetts," Hawk said.

After casting his ballot at the United Methodist Church on North Madeira Avenue in Salinas, 67-year-old Diego Renteria said he remembered good economic times during Bill Clinton's presidency, so he is casting his lot with Hillary Clinton.

"She has wide experience in everything," he said. "I think the

economy is really going to get better."

At least one voter said she was disappointed that the primary candidates she favored most did not survive until the California election.

At the Carmel Mission, retired teacher and former New York resident Rose Mary Ullmann said she hoped to cast her vote for Rudy Giuliani, saying she believes Giuliani did a great job as mayor.

With Giuliani gone, her priority was voting for someone other than Sen. Hillary Clinton.

"As a New Yorker, we know that she's a carpetbagger," Ullmann said. "I would love to have a woman as president, but a woman with integrity. You can't vote for someone because they're black or white or green or purple. We need someone with integrity."

"I don't know why anyone would want to be president right now though, with everything that's going on," Ullmann said.

Martin Slanina, a 45-year-old building contractor from Monterey voting at the Methodist Church, said he wasn't a Clinton fan — which motivated him to hit the polls Tuesday.

"Hillary Clinton is absolutely unfit for any public office," he said. "During the Clinton presidency, she aided Bill Clinton in most of his shenanigans."

Slanina said he voted for Barack Obama.

At least one voter wasn't into the presidential politicking.

"I haven't been following the race for president," said Bryson Breedlove, 18, a CSUMB freshman who was voting for the first time. "I'm here for the thrill of first-time voting."

Breedlove said he wanted a chance to vote on the four Indian gaming ballot initiatives.

"I go to Indian casinos," he said. "Those issues are important to me."