



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on March 14, 2012

Santorum Wins Alabama, Mississippi

CNN also [reported](#) that Romney emerged from caucuses in American Samoa with all of the territory's nine delegates, though it did not initially post the Samoan vote totals.

In Alabama, Santorum garnered 35 percent of the vote, compared to 29 percent each for Gingrich and Romney. In Mississippi, Santorum got 33 percent, compared to 31 percent for Gingrich and 30 percent for Romney. Ron Paul was in the single digits in both southern primaries.

"We did it again," Santorum [crowed](#) as the evening's results became apparent, adding a barb laid against front-runner Mitt Romney. "For someone who thinks this race is inevitable, he spent a whole lot of money against me for being inevitable."

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich — who had been the favorite in Alabama and Mississippi just a week ago — finished a second in both states. According to [exit polls](#), Romney polled third in both Alabama and Mississippi largely because he lost self-described conservative voters and self-described Tea Party supporters to both Santorum and Gingrich. Romney won self-described moderate and liberal voter demographics according to exit polls, a much smaller demographic in GOP primaries.

In Hawaii, Romney got 45 percent of the vote followed by Santorum at 25 percent and Paul at 18 percent. Gingrich came in a distant fourth.

The Santorum campaign has ratcheted up talk about Newt Gingrich dropping out of the race. "We've earned a one-on-one with Mitt Romney," senior Santorum adviser John Brabender [told](#) CNN's Wolf Blitzer after the results came in.





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Gingrich has only won two states, South Carolina and his home state of Georgia. The Santorum strategy is that the majority of GOP voters don't want Romney as their nominee, and that a one-on-one race against Romney would mean a Santorum victory.

Romney has continued to push the idea of the inevitability of his nomination, even though he now possesses only about half of the awarded delegates and continues to pull in less than a majority of votes in most primaries and caucuses.

"Senator Santorum is at the desperate end of his campaign," Romney had [told](#) CNN's *State of the Union* earlier in the evening before CNN reported the vote totals.

Governor Romney tried to minimize expectations in the South in the March 13 primaries by pointing to the [upcoming](#) March 20 primary in Illinois. "It's an away game for me," Romney [told](#) Fox News' Neil Cavuto of the southern primaries. Romney has reportedly put millions of dollars into his Illinois campaign. The *Los Angeles Times* [reported](#) March 13 that "All told, the former Massachusetts governor and his allies have spent \$2.26 million on television commercials in Illinois, with more than \$1.7 million of that coming from the Restore Our Future 'super PAC.'"

By most counts, Romney currently possesses only about a third of the needed 1,144 delegates needed to clinch the GOP nomination. Romney has also tried to quash talk of a brokered convention where no single candidate has a majority. "Why, can you imagine anything that would be a bigger gift to Barack Obama than us not having a nominee until the end of August? That is just not going to happen," Romney [told](#) Fox News' Neil Cavuto. But there may be evidence that proves the contrary. President Obama polls lower in states where contested



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GOP primaries have been held, such as Iowa, indicating that the Republican message is winning over voters through the primaries. "More than any other early state, the discussion in the Iowa GOP contest centered on attacking the president," Democratic Party consultant Paul Begala [conceded](#) in a February 18 interview with the *Des Moines Register*. "The enduring lesson is that unanswered attacks do real damage." Continued primaries through the convention may actually strengthen Republican prospects in November.

The [next](#) caucus state will take place in Missouri Saturday March 17, a state where Santorum has already won a non-binding primary vote, followed by the March 20 Illinois primary.

Photo of Rick Santorum: AP Images



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