

# [***Trump wins Iowa Republican caucuses***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B40-9RH1-DY7V-G03W-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Former [*President Donald Trump*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/president-donald-trump-45) on Monday won the [*Iowa caucuses*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/live-news/iowa-caucuses-01-15-24/index.html), solidifying his place as the front-runner for the 2024 Republican nomination as he attempts a historic political comeback nearly three years after [*leaving the White House*](https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/20/politics/donald-trump-leaves-white-house/index.html) in disgrace.

Trump's victory in this, his first election since losing to [*Joe Biden*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/joe-biden) in 2020, put to bed any lingering questions about his hold over the GOP, the potency of his right-wing message and whether his legal troubles would hobble him with primary voters.

The decisive nature of the outcome also made for an unusually magnanimous Trump in his remarks to supporters in Des Moines on Monday night.

"I want to congratulate Ron (DeSantis) and Nikki (Haley) for having a good, a good time together," the former president said of his top rivals for the GOP nomination. "We're all having a good time together. I think they both actually did very well."

His allies and aligned groups were more direct.

"The people of Iowa sent a clear message tonight: Donald Trump will be the next Republican nominee for President," Alex Pfeiffer, a spokesman for Trump's super PAC, MAGA Inc., said in a statement. "It's now time to make him the next President of the United States."

DeSantis will finish second in the Iowa caucuses, ahead of Haley. Biotech entrepreneur [*Vivek Ramaswamy*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/15/politics/vivek-ramaswamy-ends-presidential-campaign/index.html), who was in fourth place, ended his campaign Monday night and endorsed Trump.

As the GOP field continues to narrow and Trump reasserts his dominance with conservatives, DeSantis and Haley are now facing added pressure to prove they have a path to the nomination. Haley has more riding on the next contest on the Republican calendar - New Hampshire, where she is hoping to impress among a more ideologically diverse electorate in next week's primary.

The Iowa outcome is a deeper cut for DeSantis, who along with aligned outside groups spent heavily in the state hoping to overtake Trump and signal a changing of the guard in national Republican ***politics***.

It was not to be.

Determined to avoid the disappointment of eight years ago, when he [*finished second*](https://www.cnn.com/2016/02/01/politics/iowa-caucuses-2016-highlights/index.html) behind Texas Sen. Ted Cruz in the caucuses, Trump's campaign invested in an estimable ground game. The focus: finding and turning out new voters.

"Other candidates are betting on turning out existing caucus-goers," a senior Trump campaign official told CNN last month. "Our focus is on finding and creating first-time caucus-goers."

The [*snow and freezing temperatures*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/15/weather/weather-iowa-caucuses-cold-dg) ahead of the caucuses likely complicated those efforts and it is unclear, for now, how much of a role the new strategy played in delivering the state to Trump.

What's more certain is that Trump also appears to have won over evangelical Christian voters in the state - a key voting bloc that broke for Cruz in 2016 but has since grown into one of the former president's most loyal and fervent constituencies, in Iowa and beyond.

There is no doubt, however, that the Republican nomination - which would be a remarkable third in three tries - is now in sight for the former president.

Shortly after the state was called for Trump, the focus pivoted to the race for second place. DeSantis ultimately scratched out the result his allies said he needed to remain a viable contender.

"We've got our ticket punched out of Iowa," the Florida governor said at a watch party in West Des Moines, reaffirming his commitment to staying in the 2024 race.

In public and private, DeSantis has been adamant that he is not exiting the race. His campaign is now quickly moving staff to New Hampshire and South Carolina, where he plans to campaign aggressively over the next month.

DeSantis has told advisers he believes that cracks have formed in Haley's candidacy as she's come under increased scrutiny. He also expects that Trump's upcoming trials have the potential to upend the race, a possibility that would only benefit someone still in the ring, according to multiple people with knowledge of his thinking.

Haley had less at stake in Iowa. Her true test will come next week in New Hampshire as anti-Trump Republicans consider their options, perhaps for the last time, as they seek to consolidate what remains of that faction of the party.

"Our campaign is the last best hope of stopping the Trump-Biden nightmare," Haley said late Monday, in remarks that mainly targeted the former and current presidents, but included little mention of DeSantis.

The Biden campaign reacted to the Iowa result with a message that echoed Trump's own, at least partly.

"The Iowa results are in, and it's clear: Donald Trump is the official frontrunner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination," a Biden fundraising appeal read. "We need to work even harder now. If Donald Trump is our opponent, we can expect vile attacks, endless lies, and massive spending."

Both the DeSantis campaign and candidate himself criticized news outlets Monday for projecting Trump's victory early in the evening and before some caucus sites had completed voting. In [*a statement posted*](https://twitter.com/andrewromeo33/status/1747074147992138158) on social media, spokesman Andrew Romeo called it "absolutely outrageous."

CNN projected Trump's victory in Iowa at 8:30 p.m. ET based on his commanding lead in the entrance polling and early results. Several other news outlets projected Trump would win in Iowa within minutes of each other.

This story has been updated with additional information.

CNN's Kristen Holmes, Kaitlan Collins and Donald Judd contributed to this report.

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