

Voters in California, Ohio and New Jersey cast the final ballots of the nation's longest presidential primary season today in elections that could tell whether President Ford can be overtaken, and whether Jimmy Carter can be stopped.

It was Ford against Ronald Reagan and Carter against three sets of Democratic opponents, for the biggest one-day delegate crop since the primary voting began 15 weeks ago.

All told, Democrats were selecting 540 national convention delegates, Republicans 331.

The early voter turnout in Ohio was moderate to heavy with the weather clear. Crossover balloting was not expected to be heavy among the expected 2.55 million voters.

In New Jersey the early turnout appeared to be light to moderate, as state officials had projected.

In California, the polls opened at 10 a.m. EDT. Voter turnout was expected to be heavy

because of a controversial initiative on the statewide ballot and local issues.

Ford entered the last set of primaries with 804 of the 1,130 delegates needed to win the Republican nomination. Reagan has 692 and there are 148 in the uncommitted column. Republicans will choose another 283 delegates in caucuses and state conventions, and that is where the competition will focus after today.

Carter is far ahead of the Democratic field, and bids today for delegates to move himself beyond the reach of the rivals who seek to stop him. He now has 909, with 1,505 needed for nomination. That is nearly three times his closest challenger, Rep. Morris K Udall, who has 307.5. There are 393.5 uncommitted Democratic

delegates, and 141 to be chosen after the primaries.

Today's balloting lines up this way:

California

Reagan, the former governor, is in his home territory, bidding for 167 delegates in a winner-take-all contest with the President. Ford casts himself as the underdog but adds: "I don't rule out the possibility that there could be a surprise.""

One Ford aide said a victory in California would be a miracle.

The Republican campaign there escalated in the closing hours as Reagan bitterly to a Ford commercial suggesting that as President he could start a war. He called it

(Continued on page 9)