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The battle to confirm Judge Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court is set to come to a head this week and will probably reshape how the Senate confirms future justices, prompting senators and other observers to warn that subsequent battles over court nominees could be even more heated.

Gorsuch’s nomination to replace Antonin Scalia, with whom he shares an “originalist” philosophy of constitutional interpretation, is unlikely to tip the ideological balance of the Supreme Court. And Gorsuch’s three days of confirmation hearings last month never captured the national attention afforded to previous nominees.

But with the Senate Judiciary Committee scheduled to refer him to the full Senate on Monday, lawmakers are about to embark on the final — and perhaps most bitter — round of debate.

Three days of formal debate begin Tuesday with Republicans planning to confirm Gorsuch by Friday. That timeline would give the 49-year-old federal appeals court judge a chance to join the high court in late April and to participate in the final cases of this year’s term, which ends in June.

The Republican-controlled Senate is likely to confirm him, but only if it changes the chamber’s rules. Democrats are vowing to filibuster Gorsuch, a tactical roadblock that can only be overcome with the votes of 60 senators. Republicans hold 52 seats, and only three moderate Democrats so far say they plan to vote for Gorsuch.

On Sunday, Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said that it is “highly, highly unlikely” that Republicans will get the 60 votes needed to end a Democratic filibuster. Appearing on NBC’s “Meet the Press,” Schumer added that it “is up to Mitch McConnell and the Republican majority” to set the rules and tenor for the confirmation vote.

But McConnell (R-Ky.), the Senate majority leader, disagreed, telling “Fox News Sunday” that Gorsuch will “ultimately be confirmed. Exactly how that happens . . . will be up to our Democratic colleagues.”

If Democrats successfully filibuster Gorsuch, McConnell and his caucus are likely to agree to change the chamber’s rules and end filibusters on Supreme Court picks. That would extend a rule change made by Democrats in 2013 that punished Republicans for years of attempts to block President Barack Obama’s nominees by ending filibusters for all executive branch appointments and lower-court picks.

Last year, Republicans refused to hold hearings or votes for Judge Merrick Garland, Obama’s choice to replace Scalia, arguing that the next president should get to pick the replacement. The move infuriated Democrats — and has been a major factor in generating such unified opposition to Gorsuch.

Martin B. Gold, a former floor adviser and counsel to Senate majority leaders Howard Baker (R-Tenn.) and Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), who has written a book on Senate floor procedure, warned that this week’s expected change in Senate rules is likely to put even more importance on the partisan control of the Senate.

“Between the Democrats taking offense at what the Republicans did on Garland and Republicans taking offense to what Democrats are doing to Gorsuch, you wonder who’s going to put the weapons down, or if they’ll always stay drawn,” Gold said. “And if the partisan makeup flips, you wonder if a president will ever get anyone confirmed.”

In interviews before Gorsuch’s confirmation hearings last month, several Republican senators agreed that Gorsuch was a safe conservative choice who would maintain the balance of the court and make future fights to fill vacancies even more critical.

“I have no doubt that from the Democrats’ perspective, the next vacancy will be Armageddon. They will fire every attack they can marshal at whoever the nominee is,” said Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.).

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) agreed, saying that the next confirmation fight will be “a bloodbath.”

The predictions by Cruz and Flake assume that the next Supreme Court vacancy will be caused by the departure of aging liberal justices, such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg or Stephen G. Breyer, or by Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, the court’s most frequent swing vote.