Ron Paul wins Florida Republican Debate, McCain stumbles on Economy

Contributed by Stu Norman
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There was a strong anti war pro Ron Paul crowd in the Florida Primary Republican Debate audience on the campus of Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida tonight. Results from a MSNBC post debate text messaging poll showed Ron Paul leading before the network decided not to post the official results at the end of the post-debate coverage. The move clearly gets conspiracy theorists abuzz on the Ron Paul posting forums. There was no doubt once again that the clear winner of the debate was Ron Paul. Sportsbook.com has Ron Paul at 25 to 1 odds to capture the 2008 Republican Party Presidential Nomination.

“We are moving into a new era,” stated Dr. Ron Paul.

Paul has yet to win a primary but his second place finish in the Nevada Caucus followed by his second place in yesterday’s Louisiana Caucus has boosted his campaign. Republican Presidential hopefuls such as John McCain, Mike Huckabee and Rudy Guiliani do not have the dough to survive that far beyond Florida giving Paul a nice advantage to outlast the other lower tiered candidates and gobble up some of their support once they leave the race.

Unlike the Democratic Party debate for the South Carolina Primary race, the Republicans had a nonaggression pact before the start of the Florida Primary debate. All of the candidates were cordial and refrained from attacking each other. Another difference between the two debates were the stances on the Iraqi War. It was very clear that all of the Republican Candidates, with the except of anti-war candidate Paul, will go into fall Presidential Race saying the war in Iraqi was worth it. It is looking more and more like it will be a PRO WAR vs ANTI WAR Presidential Race in 2008.

If Republican Presidential front runner John McCain wins the Florida Republican Primary, he should lock up the Republican Party's 2008 Presidential Nomination. Sportsbook.com has John McCain at 4 to 7 odds to secure the 2008 Republican Presidential Nomination. The elder statesmen with the silver hair stumbled tonight when he was asked a question on the United States Economy by Ron Paul.

McCain has been endorsement by former New York Senator Alfonse D’Amato, a blow to Guiliani campaign. The endorsement could be a sign that the Poker Player Alliance is making some head way against the current “War on Internet Gambling ” taking place in Washington. The Poker Players Alliance (PPA) is an American nonprofit Interest group of over 840,000 members that was formed "to speak with one voice to promote poker, ensure its integrity, and, most importantly, to protect the players' rights." The PPA formed to serve as an advocacy group to Washington in order to establish a legal framework of rights and protections for United States online poker players. Alfonse D'Amato is chairman of the PPA.

The Rudy Guiliani campaign got another dagger when the New York Times endorsed John McCain saying “he is ready to be president...it is a difficult era....he can beat Hillary Clinton."

All of these endorsements, including the recent one from Rambo, won’t help McCain with the GOP conservative base which does not like him. A lost in the Florida Primary will certainly be a blow to the cash strapped candidate who needs a win or strong finish to secure additional campaign contributions. Mitt Romney has already spent $40 million dollars of his own funds for his campaign and has plenty more to pour in if needed.

Guliani’s Florida debate performance was underwhelming at best. Rudy Guiliani wants to build up the United States military in order to keep a leg up on rising power China. Guiliani wants Americans to view the communist nation as a land of opportunity with 30 million new potential consumers to sell American products too. Gambling911.com reported that an online gambling industry representative will be having one-on-one dialogue (and “informed lobbying”) with Rudy Guliani this week regarding his stance on Internet gambling and the advertising thereof.

Conservatives believe the maverick Arizona Senator and liberal leaning former New York Mayor would ruin the party if either become the 2008 Republican Presidential Nominee. Conservatives cannot vote for John McCain or Rudy Guiliani as the Republican Presidential Nominee but could vote for them in the Presidential Race to keep the Clintons out of the White House. The conservatives are starting to lean towards Romney now that Fred Thompson dropped out of the race. The former Massachusetts Governor performed well in the Florida Republican Primary Debate and actually looked Presidential.

The only thing that was similar between the recent Democratic & Republican debates was the Hillary Clinton bashing. The Republicans want Hillary on the Democratic ticket because it would rally the base which many political pundits believe is needed for GOP victory in 2008. The last thing hard core Republicans want is another Clinton in the White House and all of the Republican Presidential hopefuls know this fact. Clinton is the current favorite to become the next President of the United States at 6 to 5 odds at Sportsbook.com.

The Clinton’s were a huge topic of interest tonight as the candidates attempted to look Presidential. Mike Huckabee commented that he has defeated the Clinton Machine four times in various Arkansas elections over the years which his campaign believes give him a leg up to the Republican Presidential Nomination. Romney was the anti-Washington and anti-anyone that has been there before candidate.

“The idea of Bill Clinton back in the White House with nothing to do...I can't imagine,” stated Mitt Romney in the Florida Republican Primary.

Romney's message is that he is running against a system that does not work in Washington and his solution oriented approach is the answer to clean up beltway equally applies to Republican rival McCain and Democratic front runner Hillary Clinton. The Romney strategy will rally voters against both Hillary Clinton and rival John McCain. This message is working and the former Massachusetts Governor should have been on the anti-Washington bandwagon from the start.

Sportsbook.com has posted political betting odds to win the 2008 Republican Party Presidential Nomination:

John McCain: 4-7

Mike Huckabee: 12-1

Mitt Romney: 3-1

Ron Paul: 25-1

Rudy Giuliani: 4-1