


Why Iowa and New Hampshire are so important

Only since 1972 have state primary races been established as the key to winning the party's nomination for president. Now the states with the earliest decisions – Iowa and New Hampshire – play a key role that has pushed convention dealmaking largely into the history books. A candidate doesn't necessarily have to win those states (see names of eventual winners highlighted in bold below), but a strong showing in one of those states is generally key.



IOWA		NEW HAMPSHIRE		FIRST NOMINATING BALLOT AT CONVENTION	
1972					
Uncommitted	35.8%	Edmund Muskie	46.4%	George McGovern	1,728
Edmund Muskie	35.5	George McGovern	37.1	Henry Jackson	525
George McGovern	22.6	Sam Yorty	6.1	George Wallace	381
1976					
Uncommitted	37.2	Jimmy Carter	28.4	Jimmy Carter	2,238
Jimmy Carter	27.6	Mo Udall	22.7	Mo Udall	329
Birch Bayh	13.2	Birch Bayh	15.2	Jerry Brown	300
1980					
Jimmy Carter	59.1	Jimmy Carter	47.1	Jimmy Carter	2,123
Edward Kennedy	31.2	Edward Kennedy	37.3	Edward Kennedy	1,150
		Jerry Brown	9.6	Jerry Brown	11
1984					
Walter Mondale	48.9	Gary Hart	37.3	Walter Mondale	2,191
Gary Hart	16.5	Walter Mondale	27.9	Gary Hart	1,200
George McGovern	10.3	John Glenn	12.0	Jesse Jackson	465
1988					
Dick Gephardt	31.3	Michael Dukakis	36.4	Michael Dukakis	2,876
Paul Simon	26.7	Dick Gephardt	20.3	Jesse Jackson	1,218
Michael Dukakis	22.2	Paul Simon	17.4	Richard Stallings	3
1992					
Tom Harkin	76.4	Paul Tsongas	33.2	Bill Clinton	3,372
Uncommitted	11.9	Bill Clinton	24.8	Jerry Brown	596
(Bill Clinton won)		Bob Kerrey	11.1	Paul Tsongas	209
1996					
Bill Clinton		Bill Clinton	82.5	Bill Clinton	4,277
(unopposed)		(virtually unopposed)			
2000					
Al Gore	63.4	Al Gore	49.0	Al Gore	4,328
Bill Bradley	34.9	Bill Bradley	44.9		

Source: Iowa Secretary of State, New Hampshire Democratic Party, *US Presidential Candidates and the Elections*, James T. Havel, author.

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