

## *CHAPTER 9*

### *SUPER-DUPER TUESDAY*

There is a nomenclature progression with the first day on which Democratic Party rules permit any state to hold presidential caucuses or a presidential primary. The original name, first used in the 1980s, was Super Tuesday. In 2000, however, when the heavily populated states of New York and California joined the party, the name Titanic Tuesday came into fashion. In 2008, when over 20 states decided to hold presidential caucuses and primaries on that one day, much of the news media began referring to Super-Duper Tuesday.

Having a large number of states vote on the same presidential primary election day was the mid-1980s brainchild of the Democratic Leadership Council, a group of moderate southern white Democrats who wanted to see the Democratic Party nominate more southern-oriented and more moderate candidates for president. If a large number of southern states voted on the same day as early in the primary schedule as possible, the logic went, this would give a boost to candidates from southern states. Even if a southerner failed to win in the South on what came to be called Super Tuesday, so many southern states voting on the same day would boost the more moderate Democratic candidates who would be expected to run well in the South.

The Democrats found it easy to implement Super Tuesday in the 1980s because most of the state legislatures in the South still had Democratic majorities in both houses. As the Super Tuesday bandwagon started rolling in the mid-1980s, more and more southern state legislatures, dominated by the Democratic Party, adopted the second Tuesday in March as their primary day. That was the first day, according to national Democratic Party rules, on and after which states other than Iowa and New Hampshire could hold presidential caucuses and primaries.

As so often happens in presidential nomination matters, the Republicans in the South had no choice but to go along with Super Tuesday. At the same time Democratic majorities in the state legislatures in southern states decided to hold the Democratic primary on Super Tuesday, they often de facto selected the same date for the Republican primary.

Super Tuesday did not work well for moderate southern Democrats

in the 1988 primary season. One problem was that an African-American candidate for the Democratic nomination, civil rights activist Jesse Jackson, received most of the black vote in the South on Super Tuesday. This denied those black votes to the moderate southern white candidate, who was U.S. Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee. This splitting of black and white southern votes between Jackson and Gore enabled a northern liberal, Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis, to win a number of key southern states on Super Tuesday in 1988, the most important of which were the populous states of Florida and Texas. Dukakis went on to win the Democratic nomination in 1988 but lost the general election, including all of the South, to Republican George H. W. Bush.

The creators of Super Tuesday hoped that having so many southern states hold primaries on the same day would attract more southern candidates to run for the Democratic nomination for president. In 1992, the moderate southern candidate for the Democratic nomination for president was Bill Clinton, the governor of Arkansas. His candidacy was oriented around the idea that a moderate southerner would romp on the southern Super Tuesday and thereby gain enough momentum to win the Democratic nomination.

Clinton's strategy was aided by the fact that, by the time the 1992 primaries and caucuses began, there were no black candidates for the Democratic nomination for president. Jesse Jackson decided not to run in 1992. The only other prospective black candidate, Governor L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia, dropped out of the race long before the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. Clinton thus found himself in the beneficial position of being the only moderate southern candidate, white or black, on the ballot in all of those southern states on Super Tuesday.

As it turned out, 1992 was the year that the moderate southern strategy for winning the Democratic nomination on Super Tuesday worked. Following a big win one week earlier in the southern state of Georgia, Bill Clinton roundly defeated his major opponent, liberal northerner Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts, in all those southern states voting on Super Tuesday in 1992. It was big victories in the populous states of Florida and Texas that really put Clinton over the top.

After sewing-up the 1992 Democratic nomination on the southern

Super Tuesday, Bill Clinton went on to win the White House from incumbent Republican President George H. W. Bush, who was running for a second term. Clinton's triumph was a big moment for the Democratic Leadership Council. The organization's basic strategy, that the Democrats can gain the presidency only with moderate southern candidates who can win white southern votes, had been vindicated. Bill Clinton carried four southern states (Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Tennessee) that were a big part of his 1992 presidential victory.

In 1996, Super Tuesday faded off the national scene. The incumbent Democratic president, Bill Clinton, ran unopposed for reelection, so there was no Democratic activity at all. On the Republican side, U.S. Senator Bob Dole of Kansas eliminated his main opponent, conservative-commentator Patrick Buchanan, one week before the Super Tuesday voting. All those southern Republican primaries were held, and loyal Republicans tramped out to vote in them, but those primaries had no effect on who was going to be the Republican nominee.

The following November, incumbent Democratic President Bill Clinton easily defeated Republican Bob Dole and thereby earned a second term in the White House.

By the year 2000, Super Tuesday had changed in character. It was no longer dominated by the southern states. A number of states from around the nation caught the Super Tuesday craze and front-loaded their presidential caucuses and primaries on to what the news media began calling Titanic Tuesday. Foremost among those new states were California and New York, the two most populous states in the nation. In addition, many of the New England states, except for New Hampshire, clambered aboard Titanic Tuesday.

By the year 2000, the Democrats had moved the date of Titanic Tuesday forward one week from the second Tuesday in March to the first Tuesday in March. When a number of southern states, but not all, stuck with the old date of the second Tuesday in March, Titanic Tuesday lost even more of what little southern influence was left.

In 2000, Titanic Tuesday did not happen for the Democrats and was the last day on which meaningful votes were cast by the Republicans. In

the Democratic race that year, Vice-President Al Gore defeated his major opponent, former-U.S. Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey, in both the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. That was the end for Bill Bradley's campaign, so all the Democratic caucuses and primaries on Titanic Tuesday were irrelevant to the selection process.

In the Republican contest in 2000, Texas-Governor George W. Bush defeated his main opponent, U.S. Senator John McCain of Arizona, in all of the Titanic Tuesday states except for a few in New England. McCain ended his candidacy on the day after his big Titanic Tuesday losses.

The year 2004 found Titanic Tuesday, the old Super Tuesday, to be irrelevant to both political parties. Incumbent Republican President George W. Bush was not seriously challenged for his party's re-nomination that year and routinely won all the Republican contests. In the other political party, it looked like the Democrats were going to have a rousing series of presidential caucuses and primaries lasting through Titanic Tuesday. U.S. Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts defeated former-Governor Howard Dean of Vermont in both Iowa and New Hampshire, however, and with that the 2004 Democratic race was over. It never got anywhere near Titanic Tuesday.

By the year 2004, it was clear that Titanic Tuesday could or could not be a major factor in presidential nominating contests. One thing was crystal clear. If a race in either political party lasted until Titanic Tuesday, that race was *always* decided once and for all on Titanic Tuesday.

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By the year 2008, there could be no better example than Super-Duper Tuesday, the successor to Super Tuesday and Titanic Tuesday, of the uncontrolled way that presidential primaries and caucuses are created and evolve.

No rational individual or organized group set out to create a single presidential caucuses and primary day on which many states, some of them quite populous, would all vote. Super-Duper Tuesday evolved over the years out of totally random forces. It was an accidental product, created by the uncoordinated actions of a wide variety of persons and organizations, most of whom paid no attention whatsoever to what the

others were doing.

Everything changes when so many states are holding presidential primaries on the same day. No longer is the campaign limited to one or two states with voting populations that are totally unrepresentative of the American people as a whole. Regional influences (New England liberalism versus southern conservatism) negate one another. Populous states (California, New Jersey, and New York) hold caucuses and primaries, as do states with small populations (Delaware and North Dakota). Every major part of the United States participates, from New England to the East Coast to the Midwest to the South to the Rocky Mountain states and on to the West Coast.

The sheer size of the enterprise is daunting. The total population of the states holding primaries and caucuses on Super-Duper Tuesday in 2008 topped 150 million. Many of the nation's top 25 media markets were involved. Citizens were voting simultaneously in such giant metropolitan areas as Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, Saint Louis, and San Francisco. Ten times as many convention delegates were at stake as had been decided in all the previous caucuses and primaries in 2008.

Candidates have to turn to a completely different campaign style. Shaking hands at the factory gate and chatting in some grandmother's kitchen is done only briefly, if at all, for the daily photo opportunity. The presidential caucuses and primaries become more like the general election in November, with candidates jetting from state to state and doing campaign events in giant airport hangars and sports arenas. Appeals to giant masses of primary voters are delivered by television spot ads and direct mail.

Ironically, comparatively little candidate campaign time was devoted to the Super-Duper Tuesday states in 2008 compared to the candidate campaign time given to Iowa and New Hampshire. Because Iowa and New Hampshire voted first, candidates spent anywhere from 10 to 52 weeks campaigning in those two early states. Super-Duper Tuesday in 2008 occurred only four weeks after the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. There also was only a week or so to campaign after

the previous Republican and Democratic primaries in South Carolina. Big and important as Super-Duper Tuesday was, it became essentially a one-week campaign due to its location in a crowded part of the primary and caucuses schedule.

One of the best things for a candidate to have on this biggest of all mega-Tuesdays is local organization. The support of state and local party members who are prominent elected officials is vital. Visible and vocal endorsements from governors, U.S. senators, mayors, and state legislators give the candidate solid publicity in the particular state at virtually no cost. Strangely, the bigger and more national that Super-Duper Tuesday became, the more critical was state and local party organization support for the candidates.

Also important was so-called “earned” media coverage. Getting a spot on a national television network news broadcast was particularly valuable because the candidate was gaining free TV exposure in every state holding a primary or caucuses. In the more populous states, talking to listeners on radio talk shows or doing satellite interviews with local television news anchors paid rich rewards. Equally desirable were write-ups and photo-essays in national magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek*.

The gigantic size and scope of Super-Duper Tuesday actually had the effect of blunting the influence of money in trying to win so many presidential caucuses and primary elections on the same day. There just were too many media markets for any candidate to buy advertisements in all of them, or even most of them. A Republican media specialist noted: “In gross terms, the amounts of cash on hand sound big, but you need to spread it across so many media markets.”

Just how big is the change in scale from the New Hampshire primary to Super-Duper Tuesday? As a Californian might point out, the population of San Jose, a second-tier city in just one of the more than 20 states voting, is approximately equal to the population of the entire state of New Hampshire.

Super-Duper Tuesday, with its nationwide reach in 2008, offered the news media the opportunity to cover the scenic grandeur of the United States. As press attention focused on politics and campaigning by multi-

ple candidates in two political parties in more than 20 states, beautiful background images were presented of candidates trolling for votes along the California beaches, eating bagels and cream cheese in downtown Manhattan in New York City, or standing in corn fields talking to farmers in Missouri.

Super-Duper Tuesday in 2008 was scheduled for February 5. That date was selected by the Rules Committee of the Democratic National Committee. At the same time, the Rules Committee designated early caucuses and primary dates for Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina in January. The Rules Committee picked Tuesday, February 5, 2008, as the first day on or after which any state could vote.

A number of Rules Committee members told the press they were shocked by how many states “piled on” that date. The names Super Tuesday and Titanic Tuesday seemed inadequate to such a big day of voting and caucusing. Thus the name Super-Duper Tuesday was born, although some of the press preferred Tsunami Tuesday, named for a type of giant tidal wave, one of which had devastated Indonesia a few years earlier.

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The Barack Obama campaign coming into Super-Duper Tuesday was characterized by giant political rallies with surging overflow crowds. A morning rally in Denver, Colorado, was typical. So many people wanted to see Obama on the stump that the ice hockey arena at Denver University was completely filled with cheering throngs. An overflow crowd watched on a jumbotron television set in a nearby auditorium, and still more people were relegated to listening to his talk outdoors on a sunny day on a lacrosse field. The wave of popular enthusiasm for Obama was clearly visible when such events were covered on television news programs later in the day.

Adding to the growing momentum for Barack Obama was his endorsement by two of the most prominent members of the family of John F. Kennedy, the president of the United States from 1961 to 1963, who is almost universally admired by Democrats. Caroline Kennedy, the former-president’s daughter, and Ted Kennedy, his brother, endorsed

Obama on succeeding days. Caroline Kennedy began campaigning with Obama for a few days, appearing on the podium with him at his campaign rallies and looking admiringly at him as he gave his stump speech. The twin endorsements by Caroline and Ted Kennedy were perfectly timed to have the maximum effect on the Super Tuesday voting.

The Hillary Clinton campaign, in contrast, was burdened with a bad hangover from the South Carolina Democratic primary. Not only had Hillary Clinton lost South Carolina to Barack Obama by a large margin, but it was clear she had run a poor campaign in that state. The major role played in the South Carolina race by Hillary Clinton's husband, former-President Bill Clinton, and the meanspirited character of both Clinton's negative attacks on Barack Obama, played prominently in the press throughout the week leading up to Super-Duper Tuesday.

The crowds that turned out for Hillary Clinton rallies were ample in size but compared poorly to the giant hordes coming out to see Barack Obama. In many places, she staged small discussion forums rather than large rallies. These more personal occasions gave Hillary Clinton the opportunity to discourse on complex issues, an ability of hers that was considered a strong point. One of these discussion forums looked a lot like the one in New Hampshire where Hillary Clinton had her near-tears "Moment." At one point, sensing the similarity, Hillary Clinton said to the attendees: "I promise not to cry." The remark was widely covered in the news that evening.

Despite the positive week the Barack Obama campaign was having coming into Super Duper Tuesday, the polls showed the nationwide race between him and Hillary Clinton was almost dead even. The polls suggested the two candidates would win about equal numbers of states and equal numbers of convention delegates. If either candidate was going to "break out" on Super-Duper Tuesday and "sweep to victory," the polls were giving no hint of it.

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The situation with the polls was completely different in the Republican race on Super-Duper Tuesday. Coming off his big win in the Florida primary, U.S. Senator John McCain of Arizona enjoyed a big lead in the



polls over former-Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney and former-Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee.

Romney altered his campaign schedule just prior to Super-Duper Tuesday. Polls showed Romney with an outside chance of perhaps catching John McCain in California, so Romney concentrated his last-minute campaigning in that state. Romney continued to reach out to conservative Republican voters by attacking McCain for being too lenient on illegal immigrants and for hurting businesses by backing environmental legislation. For his part, John McCain played up his front-runner status by ignoring Romney. He looked to the November election by attacking Democrat Hillary Clinton for supporting wasteful government spending.

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Election night on Super-Duper Tuesday in 2008 was a feast of election returns with a famine of surprises. As the 20-plus states reported results in both the Democratic and Republican races, everything pretty much went the way the polls had predicted.

In the Democratic contest, Illinois was one of the first states to be decided. As expected it went for its native son, U.S. Senator Barack Obama of Illinois. Shortly thereafter, Hillary Clinton was declared the winner in the three populous East Coast states of Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey, all of which held primaries. That set up a pattern in the Democratic race for the remainder of the evening. If a state held a primary, was not in the South, and had a large population, it most likely voted for Hillary Clinton.

When the South began to report in, Barack Obama was winning in Georgia and Alabama. That indicated that Obama, an African-American, was likely to do well in southern states with large black populations. In much of the deep South, 50 percent or more of the voters in Democratic primaries were African-Americans. There were two bright spots for Hillary Clinton in Dixie, however. She won in Tennessee in the upper South, and she took Arkansas, the state where her husband had been governor and she had been first lady for many years.

There was one late surprise on the East Coast. The state of Connecti-

cut voted for Barack Obama rather than Hillary Clinton. Out on the southern high plains, however, Oklahoma sided with Clinton instead of Obama.

So it went throughout the evening. One state would come in for Hillary Clinton, cheering her supporters, and minutes later a different state would be won by Barack Obama, energizing his faithful fans. Thus the Arizona primary went for Hillary Clinton, but the Colorado caucuses sided strongly with Barack Obama.

If Hillary Clinton tended to be winning primaries in states with large populations, Barack Obama was mainly triumphing in caucuses in middle-sized states, many of them in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain West. Obama racked up caucuses victories in Minnesota, Kansas, North Dakota, and Idaho.

As often happens on election nights, the last state of significance to be reported was California on the West Coast. The rule that Hillary Clinton was doing well in primaries in populous states outside the South proved true one more time, as she took California by a comfortable margin.

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The Republican race on Super-Duper Tuesday was much less exciting. John McCain's moderate credentials stood him in good stead on the East Coast as he won quick victories in Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. Mitt Romney did salvage a victory in Massachusetts, his home state, where he had served one term as governor. Similar to Barack Obama, Romney did well in caucuses, mainly in western states such as Colorado and Montana.

A wee surprise for the Republicans occurred when Mike Huckabee jumped off to an early lead in the South. He ended up winning southern states such as Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama, along with his home state of Arkansas. In retrospect, with his strong appeal to evangelical Christians, which are plentiful in the South, it was not such a surprise that Huckabee did well in that part of the nation.

John McCain drove the final nail into Mitt Romney's electoral coffin when he won California. Because so many of the populous Republican

states award their convention delegates on a winner-take-all basis, McCain came out of Super-Duper Tuesday with a commanding lead in delegates won over both Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee.

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For the Republicans, Super-Duper Tuesday functioned as that special day often had in the past. It determined the overall winner of the Republican Party caucuses and primaries. It was clear for all to see that, although the race would drag on for a little while longer, John McCain had sewed up the Republican nomination for president in 2008.

Two days later, Mitt Romney faced up to the inevitable and suspended his campaign for president.

There were a number of reasons the Romney campaign slumped as it did. Romney's Mormon religion, which the press characterized as conflicting with the beliefs of evangelical Christians, opened the door for Mike Huckabee, a Baptist minister, to split the conservative Christian vote with Romney. Furthermore, Romney failed in his attempt to portray himself as a doctrinaire conservative when he had a moderate record as governor of Massachusetts. That ploy only succeeded in labeling Romney a "flip-flopper" and a "phony." The labels stuck.

Last but not least, Romney lost ground when Rudy Giuliani's campaign failed to gain traction. Similar to John McCain, Giuliani was viewed as a moderate-to-liberal voice in the Republican Party. If Giuliani had gotten his campaign going, he might have split the moderate vote with McCain, thus giving Romney a better chance of winning what would have been a four-way race between two conservatives, Romney and Huckabee, and two liberals, McCain and Giuliani.

The caucuses and primary calendar also favored John McCain. Two of the pre-Super-Duper Tuesday states, New Hampshire and South Carolina, allowed independent voters to vote in their Republican primaries. McCain's early victories in those two states, mainly thanks to independent support, gave McCain vital early momentum that set up his subsequent victories in Florida and on Super-Duper Tuesday. Romney would have had a better chance of prevailing if all the early-voting states had been Republicans-only affairs, where conservative voters would have

predominated.

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For the Democrats, Super-Duper Tuesday did not function as had the Super Tuesdays and Titanic Tuesdays of the past. Instead of ending the race for the Democratic presidential nomination, Super-Duper Tuesday greatly muddled it. For the first time since the creation of the old original Super Tuesday in the South in the mid-1980s, a nominating race was going to go on past that first big day of multiple numbers of states voting, now known as Super-Duper Tuesday.

Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama truly fought each other to a draw on Super-Duper Tuesday in 2008. Each had won a number of states, and each had garnered a sizeable number of delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Denver in August. By most counts, the delegate race between the two candidates was just about even. The total number of votes won by each of the two candidates in all the Democratic caucuses and primaries on Super-Duper Tuesday also was close to even.

Most disturbing to Democratic Party leaders was the way in which Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were dividing the voting base of the party. Barack Obama was winning among African-Americans, young upscale voters, men, and strong anti-war liberals. Hillary Clinton was drawing support from Hispanics, downscale voters, older white women, and moderates. As the Democratic caucuses and primaries were about to drag on into the late winter and spring of 2008, there were fears these voter groups would become ever more committed to their particular candidates. There was the prospect of large numbers of Democrats becoming disaffected from the party if, at the end of a long and bitter struggle, their favorite candidate did not win the nomination.

The Democratic contest was so evenly balanced that some observers were predicting the nomination would not be determined in the remaining caucuses and primaries but at the Democratic National Convention in Denver.

The strategic situations of the two political parties were quite different following Super-Duper Tuesday. John McCain and the Republicans were hard at work mending fences, primarily between McCain and the

more conservative elements in the party, and uniting together for the fall campaign against the Democrats. The Democrats, on the other hand, were sharply divided between Hillary Clinton and Barak Obama, preparing for more caucuses and primaries struggles, and totally unknowing of what the future might hold.