If Trump doesn’t run, who wins? If Trump does run, who’s his fiercest competitor? Read along to dive deep into the numbers with Victory Insights analysts.

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(A) Executive Summary

It’s only 2021, but 2024 is on everyone’s minds. The Senate’s acquittal of former President Trump means he can run for the nomination again in 2024, but will he? If he doesn’t, who will his supporters rally behind? This chart, assembled using Victory Insights polling data from March 2021, gives us a glimpse:

The best summary is: it’s complicated. We’ll dive deep into the numbers and provide you with facts and figures to allow you to assess the situation on your own. But first, let us present some of the most important findings of the study:

- **Donald Trump remains the clear frontrunner** for the 2024 Republican Nomination in Iowa, if he decides to run. Trump has the support of more than 61% of likely caucusgoers, while no other candidate tops 10%.

- **Mike Pence and Ron DeSantis are the front-runners if Trump doesn’t run.** Pence enjoys higher overall popularity among Republicans in socially conservative Iowa, but DeSantis holds a slight advantage among likely caucusgoers.

- **Ron DeSantis is the Trump base’s second-favorite candidate** behind Trump himself. About a quarter of Trump’s voters flock to DeSantis if Trump opts not to run, bolstering his polling numbers by 344%.

- **Voters are uncertain.** Nearly 20% of voters opted to vote for “someone else” or indicated that they are undecided, and these values only increased when the option to vote for Trump was removed.

Read on for more detailed results.
(B) If Trump Runs: 2024 Iowa Caucus Poll Results

Among Very Likely Caucusgoers  Among All Republicans

- Trump: 60%
- Pence: 5%
- Haley: 10%
- Romney: 20%
- Cruz: 30%
- DeSantis: 40%
- Noem: 50%
- Pompeo: 60%
- Someone Else: 70%
- Undecided: 80%

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(C) If Trump Doesn’t Run: 2024 Iowa Caucus Poll Results

(D) 1 Million Simulations: Who Wins the Iowa Caucus?

Ron DeSantis: 57% Win Rate

Mike Pence: 36% Win Rate

Ted Cruz: 7% Win Rate
(E) Who Are Trump Voters’ Second Choices?

(F) Increase in Support if Trump Doesn’t Run
(G) Which Candidates Have a Serious Shot?

It’s unlikely that all surveyed candidates run for President, so votes might shift from low-tier candidates to top-tier candidates. We’ve determined that three candidates have a serious shot at winning Iowa – as of now.

Top-Tier Candidates
- Ron DeSantis
- Mike Pence
- Ted Cruz

Low-Tier Candidates
- Nikki Haley
- Kristi Noem
- Mike Pompeo
- Mitt Romney

(H) If Trump Doesn’t Run: Voters’ 2nd Choices

After being asked whom they’d vote for if Trump doesn’t run, respondents were then asked whom they’d vote for if the candidate they just chose also chose not to run.
(I) Who Do Low-Tier Supporters Side With?
To illustrate what will happen as the field of candidates narrows, this chart displays the flow of support from very likely caucusgoers who supported low-tier candidates as their first choice but selected a top-tier candidate as their second choice.

(J) Support for Top-Tier Candidates After Field Narrows
This chart shows very likely caucusgoers’ support for top-tier candidates in the event that low-tier candidates drop out of the race. Values do not sum to 100% due to respondents choosing other low-tier candidates, “someone else,” or “undecided.”

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**DeSantis**
- Crowded Field: 19.89%
- Narrowed Field: 3.72%

**Pence**
- Crowded Field: 19.23%
- Narrowed Field: 3.55%

**Cruz**
- Crowded Field: 16.19%
- Narrowed Field: 4.60%
(K) 1 Million Simulations: Who Wins the Iowa Caucus in a Narrowed Field?

Ron DeSantis: 54% Win Rate

Mike Pence: 29% Win Rate

Ted Cruz: 17% Win Rate

(L) Study Overview

If former President Donald Trump decides to run in 2024, he’ll win the Iowa Caucus with ease. Things get more interesting if he opts not to run. In that case, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis leads the field, largely due to his strong ties to Donald Trump. Former Vice President and fellow Midwesterner Mike Pence sits comfortably in second place among likely Iowa caucusgoers. Ted Cruz, who won the 2016 Iowa Caucus, slips into third place, yet benefits from a narrowed field.

Of course, there are several aspects of the Iowa caucus that polls can simply not anticipate. After all, the caucus is still years away. However, our demographically-weighted study of several hundred Iowa voters offers the best window we have into what lies ahead in 2024.

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