

GOP race: Still Dole's to lose

After 10 days of party turmoil, Kansas senator still the favorite.

By JOHN KING
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After a dizzying 10 days that saw one candidate jump in, one jump out and the likes of Colin Powell and Ross Perot hovering ominously on the sidelines, there remained one constant in 1996 Republican presidential politics: It is Bob Dole's race to lose.

If nothing else, the rush of events brought excitement — and attention — to a race that for months has been more plodding than provocative. Now, with the first debate and a major

Florida straw poll on tap in the coming weeks, "the preseason is over," said Greg Mueller, an adviser to commentator Pat Buchanan's campaign.

If so, it ended with a flourish. Powell, the general-turned-author, tested his appeal this past week in California, reiterating that should he decide to make a White House run, he considered the Republican route the sensible course. There was no shortage of polls showing he would immediately become the prime challenger to Dole.

Perhaps envious of Powell's political

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debut, Perot rushed into the spotlight, promising to create a new political party and field a presidential candidate in 1996. Perot insisted otherwise, but most Republicans took that to mean another Perot candidacy, something that could seriously diminish GOP odds of winning the White House.

And for all the machinations about what Powell or Perot might mean to the race, there were several unconditional shifts in the GOP field: Millionaire publisher Steve Forbes launched a deep-pocketed but improbable bid, and California Gov. Pete Wilson, once viewed as a major threat to Dole, limped out of the race, broke.

If anything, Wilson's departure could be a lesson to the ever-cautious Powell, about the organizational and financial pitfalls of starting late, and the difficulty social moderates have in GOP primaries these days.

Powell promises a decision in November, as does House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who also enjoys dangling the prospect of a presidential run. As for those who are running, here is

an update on their efforts:

BOB DOLE: Aides believe the Senate majority leader has benefited from getting a welfare reform bill passed, and are thrilled with Dole's close working relationship with Gingrich on budget and other matters. Not to mention his big fund-raising lead over the GOP pack.

But there are jitters. After an embarrassing tie with Texas Sen. Phil Gramm in an August Iowa straw poll, Dole juggled his Iowa staff. Aides also worry about unfocused speeches, and are working on a crisper stump message. And Dole has slipped in GOP primary polls, nationally and in Iowa and New Hampshire, and now trails Clinton in head-to-head polling.

"He has gone from being a strong front-runner to being a weak front-runner," suggests Gramm adviser Charles Black. While acknowledging a few slips, the Dole camp takes solace that no other candidate has moved up.

PHIL GRAMM: He is second to Dole in fund-raising. And aides say Gramm's impressive list of straw poll wins prove his appeal among grass-roots activists. But he has spent \$14 million only to

languish in single digits in national and New Hampshire polls. Gramm begins a critical effort to revive his New Hampshire effort by launching TV ads this week, knowing his support in the South could wilt if he fails first in the North. Absent a Powell or Gingrich entry, the Dole camp views Gramm as its biggest threat.

LAMAR ALEXANDER: Aides call him the tortoise, and predict the former Tennessee governor will make a late charge in Iowa and New Hampshire, especially with Wilson gone. "My campaign is the only serious campaign about dramatically changing the culture of Washington," says Alexander. After a summer of TV ads that competitors ridiculed as a waste of money, Alexander has ticked up a bit in New Hampshire. He pledged to raise \$20 million this year, but hasn't hit \$10 million yet.

PAT BUCHANAN: After an impressive start, many Republicans believe Buchanan may have peaked in the mid-teens in New Hampshire. As he tries to prove them wrong, aides worry about Gramm's improved standing in Iowa. In both states, Buchanan counts on Christian conservatives who share his

strong anti-abortion views. Buchanan's strength with that constituency has stymied two cash-strapped longshots: California Rep. Bob Dornan and radio host Alan Keyes. Trying to expand his reach to reform-minded Perot voters, Buchanan this week will propose strict lobbying and campaign finance reforms.

STEVE FORBES: Since entering the race Sept. 22, Forbes has been on TV in early primary states promoting the flat tax. But uncommitted activists in key states are skeptical of his chances.

DICK LUGAR: The earnest Indiana senator barely registers in polls, but plugs away in Iowa and New Hampshire, pitching his plan to scrap income taxes in favor of a national sales tax. He just began an intensive phone-bank operation to identify potential New Hampshire supporters.

ARLEN SPECTER: Barely a blip in national polls, Buchanan jokes there is a statistical probability that the Pennsylvania senator doesn't even exist. Specter is short cash, but strategist Roger Stone predicts mailings to 6.5 million Jews and 2.5 million Republicans who support abortion rights are about to pay off.

Monday, October 2, 1995 THE WICHITA EAGLE 3A

Dole backs away from tax cut

Even conservatives balking, he says

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, expressing surprise at the opposition of some Republican conservatives, said Sunday he might have to give ground on the GOP plan to cut taxes by \$245 billion.

"There's been some indications even from conservative Republicans ... that maybe we shouldn't try to go all the way to \$245 billion," Dole, R-Kan., said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

"Will it be \$245 billion? I'm not certain at this point."

But House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., speaking on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley," noted that Dole and other Senate leaders had voted for the \$245 billion cut and said, "I think the Senate frankly is honor bound to deliver on it."

Gingrich said it would be "virtually impossible" to win House approval of a smaller cut.

The tax reduction plan, a cornerstone of House Republicans' Contract With America, has been hammered by Democrats who say Republicans are proposing cuts that mainly benefit the well-off at the same time they are slashing social programs and promoting steep cuts in the growth of Medicare and Medicaid.

That argument got some support last week when three Republican members on the Senate Finance Committee, Orrin Hatch of Utah, Alan Simpson of Wyoming and Alfonse D'Amato of New York, all expressed skepticism about the wisdom of cutting taxes while Congress was struggling to balance the budget.

Hatch predicted that the tax cut would never happen, and D'Amato said he would prefer dealing with Medicare and Medicaid reform without "this business of tax cuts."

Dole said he was "hearing from a lot of sources on the Republican side, and not just those who've said from the start that they thought it was too much, but others who frankly I'm a little surprised by."

"For the time being," he said, the \$245 billion cut will remain his goal. "We'll see what happens."

The Republican plan would offer a \$500-a-child tax credit for families and reductions in the capital gains rate. President Clinton has proposed a \$1 billion tax cut, with much of that going to encourage secondary education.

The Senate from the beginning has been less enthusiastic than the House about tax cuts. House Republicans originally sought \$350 billion in cuts over the seven-year period in which they hope to balance the budget.

The Senate Finance Committee,

however, talked about a cut of about \$170 billion, and then only after it was certain that the federal government was on its way to a balanced budget.

House Republican freshman Rep. David McIntosh of Indiana, responding to Dole's statement, said he would urge other freshmen to oppose any effort to shrink the tax cut. "I cannot participate in and will strongly oppose a betrayal of our solemn pledge to provide tax relief for all Americans."

Great Bend Tribune

Sunday, October 1, 1995 3

Dole on the spot

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If nothing else, the rush of events brought excitement — and attention — to a race that for months has been more plodding than provocative. Now, with the first debate and a major Florida straw poll on tap in the coming weeks, "the preseason is over," said Greg Mueller, an adviser to commentator Pat Buchanan's campaign.

Hutchinson News Monday, October 2, 1995

Dole: Smaller tax cut OK

By Jim Abrams
Associated Press Writer

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Democrats continued Sunday to emphasize the link between the tax cut and plans to cut Medicare growth by \$270 billion over seven years. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., told NBC's "Meet the Press" that "to pay for a tax cut for the wealthy out of a pool of resources for Medicare is wrong."

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House Republican freshman Rep. David McIntosh of Indiana, responding to Dole's statement, said he would urge other freshmen to oppose any effort to shrink the tax cut.

Great Bend Tribune, Tuesday, October 3, 1995 5



KOMAREK HONORED — Sen. Bob Dole honored Ruth Ann Komarek, Ellinwood, for her 30 years of service in his office. She is the longest-serving member of his staff. Komarek started as a typist in his office in September 1965. She is office manager of his Hart Building office in Washington. She is the daughter of Shorty and Marie Komarek, Ellinwood. — (Courtesy photo)

Great Bend Tribune, Thursday, October 5, 1995 5



WASHINGTON TRIP — Kristen Krug, a Great Bend Middle School student, won an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to represent Kansas at the RespecTeen National Youth Forum, which was held June 17 - 22. She was chosen from more than 13,000 students who entered the RespecTeen "Speak for Yourself" letter-writing contest. Letters were submitted to each entrant's U.S. representative. Kristen's letter, written to Rep. Pat Roberts, addressed the issue of welfare reform. She will give a presentation about her trip during a reception to be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 15, at the Senior Center in Great Bend. Miss Krug is the daughter of John and Donna Krug, Great Bend. — (Courtesy photo)