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GOP Presidential Power Rankings

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It's been another interesting week in the battle for the Republican nomination for president. Rick Perry continues his free fall as Herman Cain benefits from a substantial amount of press coming off his straw poll win in Florida. Of course, Romney stands to benefit from this as he hasn't had much of a tea party appeal.

In this latest version of our Power Rankings, Cain and Newt Gingrich are moved up, Bachmann drops down into the bottom tier. And while many may disagree with this, Romney moves back to the top.

The News

- CNN [released the criteria for their next debate](#), which is set for October 18th in Las Vegas. They require that a candidate must receive an average of 2% from September 1st to October 16th. That means [Jon Huntsman](#) and [Gary Johnson](#), the latter is often not included in many national surveys, may not be allowed to participate since they are in the cellar in the polls.
- Sarah Palin seems to be subtly ruling out a bid for the GOP nomination. In an interview last week on Fox News, the conservative diva [said](#), "You don't need a title to make a difference." Over at RedState, Erick Erickson [spent Friday humorously heckling Palin](#) for [taking so long](#) to make a [decision](#).
- Sigh. Tax Hike Mike Huckabee has been [approached by conservatives asking him to run](#) for the Republican nomination. While his handlers say he isn't reconsidering his decision, others have heard that Tax Hike Mike [is seriously thinking about it](#).
- Chris Christie was been in the news a lot last week as the media constantly put out stories about the speculation that he will run. Christie has constantly denied it; however, the most recent story I saw indicated that he is reconsidering and [looking at how fast he could get together a campaign](#).
- Florida has [moved up its primary to January 31st](#) — ahead of the traditional early primary/caucus states (Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina), risking a loss of delegates to next year's Republican National Convention.
- Michael Cannon, a health policy expert at the [Cato Institute](#), wants to see the Republican candidates [come up with a credible plan to deal with entitlements](#).

The Rankings

Mitt Romney (👍): Some people may take issue with Romney's placement in this week's Power Rankings given that he is [still behind Perry in most polls](#) and that he [hasn't gained](#)

[much new support](#). That's fine, but the trend is Perry is on the decline; though his campaign can be saved. Romney continues to do well in toss-up states, [such as Florida](#), when pitted against President Obama. Romney is [expected to report a fundraising haul of up to \\$13 million](#) in the most recent quarter.

Rick Perry (🔻): It's been a rough last couple of weeks for Perry, much of it being self-induced. I'm not sure Perry can come out of it, especially given the most recent round of bad press dealing with a [racially insensitive name of a hunting ground](#) rented by the Texas Governor's family. It's being blown out of proportion, but it's going to be spun horribly by Democrats and is already been used by Cain, who is desperate to prove he belongs in the top-tier. Perry is [still hasn't given much detail of his economic plans](#), choosing instead to slam Romney and Obama. Perry is expected to bring in more than \$10 million for the most recent quarter.

Ron Paul (even): Ron Paul [raised over \\$5 million](#) in the last quarter, and he is still polling in or around third in the race. We've come to expect solid fundraising numbers from his campaign, but his support [has likely hit its ceiling](#).

Herman Cain (👆): For someone that [supported TARP](#), seems to have [no problem with the Federal Reserve](#), [supports unconstitutional legislation](#), and has [displayed a stunning lack of knowledge on foreign affairs](#); Cain sure gets a lot of support among conservatives. Yeah, he's [played](#) the [anti-Islam card](#) (and he got burned) and continues to throw out red meat soundbytes that excite the base. He's also, in case you haven't heard, an African-American. While Cain and his supporters often criticize Obama and Democrats for playing the race card, they seem to do it very often themselves. Cain has also been riding on his gimmicky 9-9-9 plan, for which no real detail has been provided. The proposal has been [panned](#) by some conservative pundits, including Kevin Williamson of the *National Review*, who wrote a [very good piece about the plan and its problems](#). Cain also [lost another staffer over the weekend](#). If you'll recall, this has been a problem for his campaign. The reaction among the conservatives blogosphere was indicative of how emotionally invested people are in a campaign of a guy that won't win the GOP nomination.

Newt Gingrich: (👆): Gingrich has risen in the polls over the last couple of the weeks, some even have him coming in third or fourth. Gingrich also [rolled out a new "21st Century Contract with America"](#) last week, on the anniversary of the 1994 Contract with America. It'll be interesting to see how he does with fundraising since that was a serious concern after the second quarter of the year.

Michele Bachmann (🔻): Despite [her Iowa plan](#), she [doesn't have enough money to compete](#) and her poll numbers have dropped substantially. There was also speculation this week that she [may not make it to the Iowa caucus](#).

Rick Santorum (even): Yeah, he's still in the race. Politico [reported last week](#) that he'd raised "less than a million" in the most recent quarter. I'm not sure why he's still around.

Jon Huntsman (even): At this point, I think Huntsman is sticking around to bring another voice on the issues given that many of the other candidates sound so much alike, but he just isn't viable.

Gary Johnson (even): I hate to say this because Johnson is my favorite candidate, but there is an open Senate seat in New Mexico that he could still have a shot at winning.