

Gingrich win in S.C. makes Nevada relevant again

By Karoun Demirjian, Las Vegas Sun

Remember Wednesday? When Mitt Romney was poised to win South Carolina, becoming the first non-incumbent Republican in history to take every early GOP presidential contest in a sweep that would render Nevada all but moot by the time the caucuses swung out West?

What a difference just a few days makes.

Newt Gingrich's South Carolina win Saturday – combined with the revelation earlier this week that Rick Santorum actually won Iowa – has split the spoils of this GOP nominating contest so fully that there's no way the early states, even once Florida votes, will have unequivocally determined a front-runner, putting Nevada back in position of influence in picking a presidential candidate.

"This speaks volumes for Nevada's relevance. ... No matter who takes Florida, Nevada is vital," Nevada GOP chairwoman Amy Tarkanian said Saturday night. "I'm very excited."

Gingrich staged a decisive victory in South Carolina's Republican presidential primary Saturday after managing to overcome a double-digit point deficit in just a few days. But what's more significant is how he did it: by coalescing the conservative Republican vote.

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