Trump thumps in Indiana; Cruz drops out of race

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — In a stunning triumph for a political outsider, Donald Trump all but clinched the Republican presidential nomination Tuesday with a resounding victory in Indiana that knocked rival Ted Cruz out of the race and cleared Trump's path to a likely November face-off with Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton.

Trump still needs about 200 delegates to formally secure the nomination, but Cruz's decision to end his campaign removed his last major obstacle.

"Ted Cruz — I don't know if he likes me or he doesn't like me — but he is one hell of a competitor," Trump said of his last fierce competitor whom he had dubbed "lyin' Ted." Trump, in a victory speech that was much lower-key than usual, promised victory in November, vowing anew to put "America first."

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders eked out a victory over Clinton in Indiana, but the outcome will not slow the former secretary of state's march to the Democratic nomination. Heading into Tuesday's voting, Clinton had 92 percent of the delegates she needs.

She and Trump now plunge into a six- month battle for the presidency, with the future of America's immigration laws, health care system and military posture around the world at



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump is joined by his wife Melania, right, and daughter Ivanka, left, as he arrives for a primary night news conference Tuesday in New York.

stake. While Clinton heads into the general election with significant advantages with minority voters and women, Democrats have vowed to not underestimate Trump as his Republican rivals did for too long.

Previewing Clinton's general election message, top adviser John Podesta said Trump was "simply too big of a risk" to be president.

For months, Republican leaders considered him a fringe candidate and banked on voters shifting toward more traditional contenders. But Trump tapped into Republicans' deep anger with party leaders and outlasted more than a dozen

experienced political rivals.

Party Chairman Reince Priebus declared the race over, saying on Twitter that Trump would be the GOP's presumptive nominee.

"We all need to unite and focus on defeating (at) HillaryClinton," he wrote.

Indeed, Trump's first challenge will be uniting a Republican Party that has been roiled by his candidacy. While some GOP leaders have warmed to the real estate mogul, others have promised to never vote for him and see him as a threat to their party's very existence.

Even before the Indiana results were finalized, some conservative leaders were

planning a Wednesday meeting to assess the viability of launching a third party candidacy to compete with him in the fall.

One outside group trying to stop Trump suggested it would shift its attention to helping Republicans in other races. Rory Cooper, a senior adviser to the Never Trump super PAC, said the group will help protect "Republican incumbents and down-ballot candidates by distinguishing their values and principles from that of Trump and protecting them from a wave election."

Indiana was viewed as the last gasp for Cruz, the fiery Texas conservative. He

Sanders defeats Clinton in Indiana

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bernie Sanders said Tuesday that his primary bid against Hillary Clinton was far from over, pointing to his victory in Indiana and strength in upcoming races as a sign of his durability in the presidential campaign.

Sanders spoke to the AP after he defeated Clinton in Indiana's primary, predicting that he would achieve "more victories in the weeks to come" in West Virginia, Kentucky, Oregon and California. The Vermont senator acknowledged that he faced an "uphill climb" to the Democratic nomination but said he was "in this campaign to win and we are going to fight until the last vote is cast."

Sanders' win in Indiana likely won't make much of a dent in Clinton's lead of more than 300 pledged delegates. Clinton is still more than 90 percent of the way to clinching the Democratic nomination when the count includes superdelegates, the elected officials and party leaders who are free to support the candidate of their

campaigned aggressively in the state, securing the support of Indiana's governor and announcing businesswoman Carly Fiorina as his running mate.

Cruz had clung to the hope that he could keep Trump from reaching the 1,237 delegates needed for the nomination and push the race to a rare contested convention.

"I've said I would continue on as long as there was a viable path to victory; tonight I'm sorry to say it appears that path has been foreclosed," Cruz told a crowd in Indianapolis.

Ohio Gov. John Kasich is now the only other Republican left in the race. But Kasich has won just one primary — his home state — and trails Trump by nearly 900 delegates.

Kasich pledged to stay in the race, with his campaign manager saying the governor would continue to "offer the voters a clear choice for our country."

Though Sanders claimed Exit polls showed about 7 in 10 Indiana Democrats said they'd be excited or at least optimistic about either a Clinton or Sanders presidency. Most said they would support either in November.

With Sanders' narrow victory Tuesday, he picked up at least 43 of Indiana's 83 delegates. Clinton now has 2,202 delegates to Sanders' 1,400. That includes pledged delegates from primaries and caucuses, as well as superdelegates.

Trump now has at least 1,047 delegates. Cruz exits the race with 565, while Kasich has 152.

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