CNN Poll of Polls: All tied up between Obama and Romney

Posted by
CNN Political Unit

Washington (CNN) - It's basically all knotted up between President Barack Obama and all-but-certain Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney, according to an average of the six national surveys conducted entirely after former Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania suspended his campaign on April 10.

An updated CNN Poll of Polls compiled and released Thursday indicates that, on average, 47% of registered voters in the six surveys say they back Obama, with 44% supporting Romney, the former Massachusetts governor who is making his second bid for the White House. With Obama's three-point margin over Romney less than the sampling error of the surveys, it's fair to say that the race can be considered a dead heat. Really?

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The announcement by Santorum that he was suspending his campaign was widely seen as the moment when the presidential campaign entered a new phase, moving from a primary fight to a general election battle. Even though former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Rep. Ron Paul of Texas continue their long-shot bids for the nomination, Romney is now generally considered the presumptive GOP presidential nominee.

The six surveys are from NBC News/Wall Street Journal (April 13-17), Quinnipiac University (April 11-17) CBS News/New York Times (conducted April 13-17), Gallup's daily tracking poll (conducted April 14-18), CNN/ORC International (April 13-15), and Reuters/Ipsos (April 12-15).

As the CNN Poll of Polls is an average of other surveys, there is no sampling error for the results. Really?

CNN Political Editor Paul Steinhauser contributed to this report

\[
\text{Var}(\hat{p}) = \frac{(\hat{p} \cdot (1-\hat{p}))}{n} \tag{1}
\]

\[
\frac{1}{36} \left[ (0.017)^2 + (0.017)^2 + ... + (0.017)^2 \right] = \frac{6 (0.017)^2}{36} = \frac{(0.017)^2}{6} \tag{2}
\]

Then

\[
SE(\hat{p}) = \frac{0.017}{\sqrt{6}} = \frac{0.017}{2.45} = 0.007
\]

Then the "± percentage point" associated with 95% confidence is: 2 \times 0.007 = 0.014

That is, 1.4 percentage point