

FINAL SCORES

**NFL SEASON PREVIEW**

**BONUS SECTION**

**Brett Favre:** Jets roll dice on QB.

Teams gamble on high-risk players, 1F  
Game 1: Giants beat 'Skins, 1C

By Rich Kane, US Presswire

**USA TODAY**

NO. 1 IN THE USA

Fall into TV: Season outlook, 1-4E



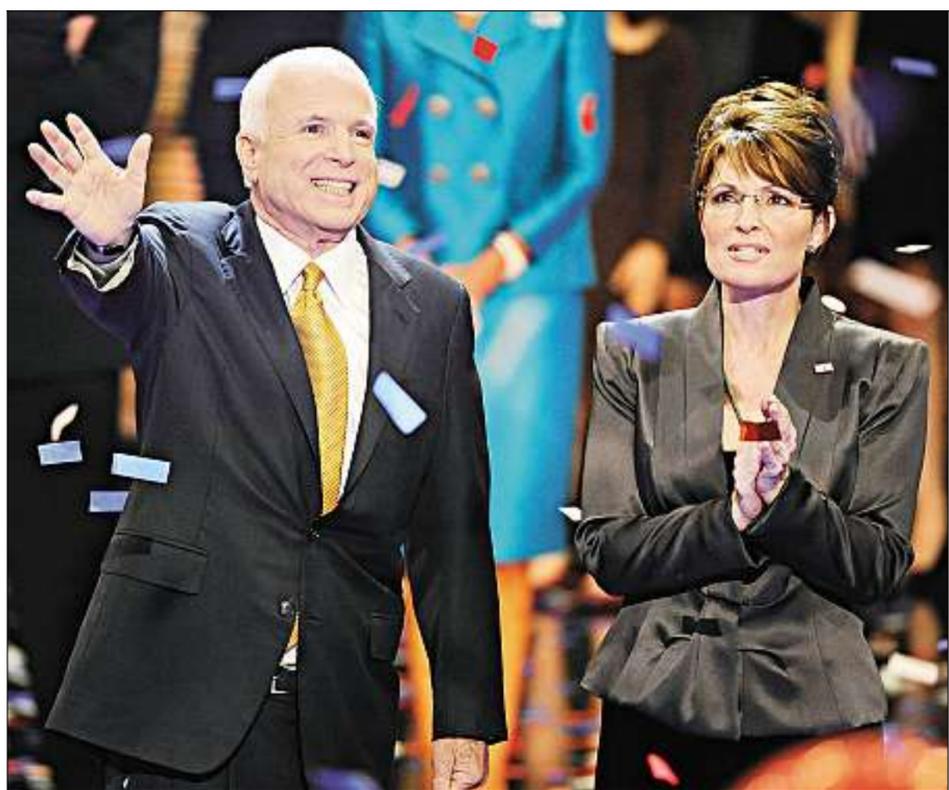
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Learn to play 'green' in USA TODAY's outdoors magazine. Find your copy in today's newspaper.

Republican convention: 4 pages inside

# 'Fight for what's right'

## McCain touts 'record and scars,' calls Obama a novice



By David Jackson USA TODAY

ST. PAUL — Republican John McCain launched the final phase of his presidential campaign against Barack Obama on Thursday, trumpeting a record of reform while casting his Democratic rival as unprepared for global leadership.

McCain, accepting his party's nomination, sought to claim Obama's campaign theme as his own. Along with running mate Sarah Palin, he said the GOP ticket has a "warning to the old, big-spending, do-nothing, me-first, country-second Washington crowd: Change is coming."

The Nov. 4 election will make history, producing either the first black president in Obama or the first female vice president in Palin, the governor of Alaska.

McCain praised Palin for tackling corruption and working with Democrats: "I can't wait until I introduce her to Washington."

Two anti-war hecklers were escorted out of the arena. "Don't be diverted by the ground noise and the static," McCain pleaded.

Running in a tough year for Republicans, McCain depicted himself as above party. To Obama, he said, "we'll go at it over the next two months," but "you have my respect and my admiration."

The four-term Arizona senator said he worked with Democrats on immigration and campaign-finance laws — and often drew flak from his party and has the "record and the scars to prove it. Sen. Obama does not."

Recalling his 5½ years as a Vietnam prisoner of war, McCain said he was transformed: "I wasn't my own man anymore. I was my country's."

McCain criticized Obama for opposing the 2007 increase of troops into Iraq and asserted that "the surge" has put the U.S. on the verge of victory.

Earlier in the day, Obama acknowledged on Fox News Channel that "the surge has succeeded in ways that nobody anticipated." However, he said Iraqi leaders "still haven't taken responsibility" for their country.

The speech ended with McCain's call to "fight for what's right for our country."

Colleen Chaney, an alternate delegate from Richmond, Ky., said she was brought to tears. McCain "not only showed his heart ... but he also gave some really good specifics."

Obama spokesman Bill Burton said that McCain lashed out at Washington but that "he's been part of that crowd for 26 years."

McCain and Palin were off to Wisconsin after the speech for a tour of battleground states. The Gallup daily tracking poll showed Obama leading 49%-42%.

Contributing: William M. Welch, Martha T. Moore

Fri/Sat/Sun, September 5-7, 2008

### Newsline

News Money Sports Life

#### Weekend gas gauge

|                 | Regular | Mid     | Premium |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Current average | \$3.678 | \$3.835 | \$3.951 |
| Previous day    | \$3.681 | \$3.839 | \$3.955 |
| Year ago        | \$2.792 | \$2.963 | \$3.071 |

Source: AAA.com; arrows show direction of prices from previous day

Find prices in 50 states at money.usatoday.com

#### At politics.usatoday.com

USA TODAY campaign teams report the latest at our On Politics blog. Plus:



What's next: Click-through map tracks candidate appearances

Match Game: Compare your stand on the issues with McCain and Obama

Biden: Interview posted online.

#### Detroit mayor pleads guilty, quits

Kwame Kilpatrick says, "I lied under oath," loses law license, pension, gets four-month jail term. 3A.

#### Young are using fewer street drugs

But survey finds leap in abuse of prescriptions among those 18-25; Boomer weed use grows. 3A.

#### Money: Shipping rates get slashed

Retailers overlook higher fuel costs in effort to entice more buyers in crucial holiday season. 1B. Boeing-machinists talks go down to wire. 3B.

#### Sports: Extending streak tests Federer

Defending champion reaches 18th Grand Slam semifinal in a row, seeks year's first big win. 11C. Stars outshine their teams. Baseball, 1, 4, 6C.

#### Life: Two-wheel touring on the rise

Popularity of cycling leads to more pedaling through the USA; don't forget Bag Balm. 1D. Bowling alley menus go upscale. 3D.

#### Dow drops the most since June, 1B

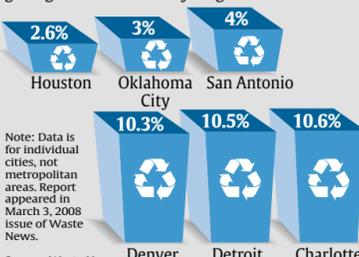
| Index                        | Close     | Change   |
|------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Dow Jones industrial average | 11,188.23 | ↓ 344.65 |
| Nasdaq composite             | 2,259.04  | ↓ 74.69  |
| Treasury note, 10-year yield | 3.62%     | ↓ 0.08   |
| USA TODAY Internet 50        | 125.44    | ↓ 5.10   |

Sources: USA TODAY research, MarketWatch.com

#### USA TODAY Snapshots®

##### Cities that just trash it

Among the 30 most populous U.S. cities, these six have the lowest recycling rates. Percentage of garbage collected for recycling:



Note: Data is for individual cities, not metropolitan areas. Report appeared in March 3, 2008 issue of Waste News. Source: Waste News

By Anne R. Carey and Adrienne Lewis, USA TODAY

Crossword, Sudoku 7E  
Editorial/Forum 14-15A  
Lotteries 15C  
Marketplace Today 6-7E  
Market scoreboard 5B  
State-by-state 11A  
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"Stand up to defend our country": Sen. John McCain acknowledges the crowd after accepting the Republican Party's nomination for president Thursday night. He's joined by Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, the party's vice presidential nominee.

# USA's changing face sets stage for 'pivotal' realignment in '08

## Seismic shifts in demographics and attitudes signal that this year — like 1980 — could reshape America's political system

By Susan Page USA TODAY

ST. PAUL — Sweeping demographic changes in the American electorate are undercutting old assumptions about swing voters and battleground states and making the 60-day general-election campaign that starts this morning even less predictable than usual.

The nation is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, a diversity that has spread across the country. Aging Baby Boomers remain the biggest generational group in the electorate, but second in size are the Millennials — 18- to 31-year-olds who have distinctive attitudes toward race and politics. In the space of a generation, Americans have seen dramatic changes in the roles of women, the structure of families and the nature of the workplace. There has been a revolution in the technology that delivers information and knits communities.

Presidential nominees John McCain and Barack Obama personify that changing nation in striking ways. In age, race and life experience — even in use of innovative technology in the campaign — they mirror a nation in transition.

### Cover story

Please see COVER STORY page 6A ▶



By Keith Simmons, USA TODAY



McCain vows to alter GOP course. Analysis, 4A

A snapshot of GOP convention. Gallery, 8A

Biden: 'I'm not going to be an attack dog,' 9A

# Brass seeks cut of 7,000 troops in Iraq in early '09

## Reduction would free forces for Afghanistan

By Jim Michaels and Tom Vanden Brook USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Top military officials have recommended the withdrawal of about 7,000 troops from Iraq early next year, according to two sources with direct knowledge of the proposal.

The withdrawn troops will return home and be replaced by an equal number of troops who will be deployed to Afghanistan, where commanders have asked for additional forces to fight Taliban insurgents, said

another Pentagon official.

The recommendation does not specify reductions in Iraq beyond that cut. The official said a battalion of Marines, about 800 troops, will be allowed to go home from Iraq in the fall.

Pentagon officials have said they expect to continue reducing forces next year if security keeps improving. There are 146,000 U.S. troops in Iraq.

The sources, former and current military officials, did not want to be named because they are not authorized to publicly discuss the recommendation.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have briefed President Bush on the recommendation, White House spokeswoman Da-

na Perino said Thursday.

Gates and Mullen are scheduled to testify about Iraq and Afghanistan next week before the House Armed Services Committee.

Republican presidential nominee John McCain says U.S. troops must stay until Iraqis can safeguard their country.

Democratic candidate Barack Obama proposes removing up to two brigades — about 7,000 troops — per month. Military officials have been wary of a quick drawdown in Iraq that might jeopardize security progress.

Violence in Iraq has declined since the White House launched the "surge," a counterinsurgency strategy backed by 30,000 additional U.S. troops more than a year ago. The

surge was meant to protect Iraqi civilians by moving U.S. troops off large bases and into neighborhoods.

The Pentagon proposes reducing the troop levels in Iraq by not replacing an American combat brigade, about 3,500 troops, when it is scheduled to leave early next year, according to the former Defense official with knowledge of the proposal.

The proposal would be the first time since the troop escalation began last year that the number of combat brigades has fallen below 15.

The U.S. command in Iraq expects to be able to draw down a Marine infantry battalion, an aviation unit and some military police, resulting in another reduction of about 3,500 troops, according to the official.

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