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What did you think about last night’s republican presidential debate?

CNN did a decent job. I was concerned about how fair CNN would be, as they are a liberal-leaning network. This was a three-hour debate that kept my attention throughout the whole event. There wasn’t much boring about it.

CNN’s use of split screens to show a candidate answering, and the candidate that may be being challenged was a good technique. It gave viewers a chance to watch a person’s expressions when being challenged.

I was also a little concerned on how the questions started. The questions were phrased in a way that any of the candidates that had received a comment from Trump over the last couple weeks were asked to respond to his comments. After that round of questions, the moderators started spreading the questions around. I do complement them for allowing any candidate to respond to any comment made about them by another candidate. There were some good exchanges in the answers. As I predicted, Jeb Bush came in with energy, and he did a decent job. He probably got the best audience applause when he defended brother George W. after Trump threw a slam on him about George W. Trump hit him on the financial crises that started during the last three months of George W. term. While Jeb didn’t defend him on that topic, he did defend him on that the country was much safer under George W. The audience did acknowledge that with probably the largest applause of the debate. While no other pundits are saying it, if you watched Trump’s reaction to Jeb’s statement, he did give a head nod acknowledging he’s right on that point.

There was also a clever exchange between Trump and Jeb when asked what they would want their code names to be if they were president. Jeb answered: Energizer, which drew a happy crowd reaction. Even Trump laughed. He gave Jeb a hand bump for that. Immediately after Jeb, Trump said is code name should be Humble. That, too, brought a large happy reaction from the audience because everyone knows Trump is anything but humble. Carson seemed okay, but a little weak. Carly Fiorina did a very good job. I would probably guess she either won the debate or was right at the top. The classic question posed to her was when they asked her to comments on Trump derogatory comment to Rolling Stone magazine, where he criticized her looks, which I do think was out of line on Trump’s part. Trump’s answer was: I think Carly is a beautiful woman with a beautiful face. Carly’s blank stare after his comments spoke volumes. Huckabee was very passionate in his responses. Rubio did a respectful job. Cruz did a great job, as well. Christie was always trying to change the direction of the debate away from the candidates going after each other, to focusing on the democratic candidates and their positions. Rand Paul took quite a few hits. Walker jumped in with some more energy and got his points across a little better than last debate. Kasich from Ohio did a fair job, but did answer some questions where audience didn’t show much support for his answer. I have to apologize that I was coming back from a meeting in L.A. yesterday during the first tier debate, so I was not able to watch it.

One question that showed some real differences between the candidates was the one concerning the Iran deal. Cruz was probably the most forceful of all the candidates against the deal. He vowed the very first day he was in office the deal would be terminated. Trump followed with the comment that he believes it is one of the worst deals he has ever seen. Iran gets everything, and we get nothing. Most of the candidates showed displeasure with the deal, but of differing resolve. I’d say Fiorina was also strong in her displeasure with the deal. Kasich drew quite a bit of flak for previously stating that the deal should be given a chance. During the answers, he had to really jump in and defend his stance. He seemed to echo the same Obama theme of trying to work with all our allies first. He ultimately said that if Iran violated the deal, then it would be off the table, and any U.S. reaction would be available.

There was considerable back and forth between the candidates on illegal immigration. I think everyone agreed about building a wall, though some were not as intense about it. There were some major differences after the wall issue. Trump led the way with the most radical approach. The questioner and some of the other candidates said Trump’s idea would work but would be too expensive, mostly about the deportation issue. Trump explained the first ones deported would be all criminals. Then the next group would be all the gangs in our large cities. He said these large gangs are made of up mostly illegal aliens.

He said it’s time to sweep through these gang infested areas and pick up all these illegals and ship them back to wherever they came from. After these bad ones are gone, then he would start looking at the rest of the problem. His idea would be to get these other acknowledged. Send them home with the prospect of a quick return after they are screened and found to not be criminals. There was also an exchange about anchor babies. Trump believes, as do many law scholars, the 14th amendment was wrongly interpreted. They argue the 14th amendment applies to any babies born in the U.S. when the mother is legally in the country. That the amendment doesn’t apply to those in country illegally.

Well, I could go on and on about the candidates and their answers. The pundits have been all over the news this morning that Carly won the debate. Many pundits are stating the stats about who had the most answer time. In this, Trump was the clear winner in answer time, but I attribute this offset was due to the opening series of questions posed by the moderators. Again, many of the questions were phrased in a manner to a candidate to answer a past trump comments about them. This allowed Trump the time to respond to each one of these questions, while the other had to stand a watch the exchanges. In the summation, Trump had to take quite a few hits. I would say that if you watched his split screen reactions, and even his many hand exchanges between him and Jeb, he took things quite professionally. There was more than once you could see Trump acknowledging a comment with a quote: “That’s a good one” comment. I don’t know if this debate will thin out the large group of candidates yet, but I hope so, not that I am targeting any individual candidate. I’m not. I just hope the field gets smaller so we will have more time to focus and learn more about the most likely candidates that have the chance of being the nominee. Again, I have not decided 100% on who I think it should be. Right now, Trump, Carly, and Cruz are getting a lot of my attention. But just like all of you, we have a long way to go yet. We have a lot to learn about these candidates yet.

In conclusion, I have to congratulate CNN and the moderators. They did a respectful job. The questions posed were relevant and properly phrased. i hope they use the same tone when they question the democratic candidates.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. I’d like to know what you think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.