

NBC's *Today*

05/24/23

7:00:23 a.m. [TEASE]

6 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE:

HODA KOTB: A major change in the 2024 presidential race.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: Ron DeSantis finally throwing his hat in the ring.

(....)

7:00:32 a.m. [TEASE]

21 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Off and Running]

GUTHRIE: Off and running.

DeSantis CAMPAIGN AD NARRATOR: America has been worth it. Every single time.

GUTHRIE: After months of speculation, Florida's Republican governor set to officially announce his White House bid today, surprising the political world by doing it on Twitter alongside Elon Musk. This morning, the impact on the race and the reaction from his chief rival, Donald Trump.

(....)

7:02:51 a.m.

3 minutes and 11 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: DeSantis Set to Launch 2024 Run]

GUTHRIE: But let's start with the 2024 presidential race. For those keeping count, the election is 75 weeks away. Later today, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is set to enter the race.

HODA KOTB: Yeah, his wife tweeting out this political ad overnight ahead of the official announcement. That will happen during a conversation on Twitter with Elon Musk.

GUTHRIE: It's already been a busy week for the Republican field. Senator Tim Scott making his announcement Monday, joining former President Trump, who announced his bid for the White House back in November. That's the Republican race. We've got it covered starting with NBC's Dasha Burns. Dasha, good morning.

DASHA BURNS: Hey, Savannah, good morning. Well, even before jumping into this race officially, Governor Ron DeSantis was the only Republican even registering in the polls compared to former President Trump. And he's been hinting at a presidential run for months now. He's been traveling the country, touting what he calls his Florida blueprint. And, now, tonight, he's set to make it official with an unconventional approach and ally, announcing on social media with one of the world's wealthiest men.

DESANTIS CAMPAIGN AD: They call it faith because, in the face of darkness, you can see that brighter future.

BURNS: Overnight, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis's wife Casey, all but launching his presidential campaign. tweeting out this 30-second political ad, writing, "America is worth the fight...Every. Single. Time." This morning, the Florida governor once endorsed by Donald Trump is now set to directly challenge the former President. Three sources familiar with the planning tell NBC News DeSantis will make his long suspected presidential ambitions public in a conversation with billionaire Elon Musk on Twitter Spaces.

ELON MUSK: He has quite an announcement to make, and it will be the first time something like this is happening on social media.

BURNS: Musk, who's faced intense scrutiny since purchasing Twitter over his leadership style and controversial posts to his 140 million followers, recently weighing in on the race with CNBC.

MUSK [to CNBC]: I wish we could have a normal human being as president. That's what I want.

BURNS: After launching his campaign, DeSantis plans to visit early voting states after Memorial Day. Though, he's already been making the rounds, touting what he calls a Florida blueprint. DeSantis has faced some blowback over his governing style, including his ongoing feud with one of Florida's largest employers and revenue generators, Disney, which just scrapped a billion dollar plan to relocate 2,000 workers to the state. And even before getting into the race, DeSantis has been a favorite Trump target.

DONALD TRUMP [on 05/13/23]: Ron DeSanctus. Did anyone hear of DeSanctus? Ron DeSanctimonious.

BURNS: And the former President now blasting his launch plan. A Trump adviser telling NBC News, "announcing on Twitter is perfect for Ron DeSantis...This way he doesn't have to interact with people." DeSantis, who once embraced Trump, has begun to fire back, but without naming him, appearing to blame him for recent election losses.

GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS (R-FL) [on 05/13/23]: We must fight the culture of losing that has infected our party in recent years.

BURNS: And after that announcement, we do expect a more traditional campaign rollout with a

launch video and visits planned to early states next week.

(....)

7:06:25 p.m.

2 minutes and 13 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: DeSantis Set to Launch 2024 Run]

HALLIE JACKSON: Let's turn now to NBC's senior Washington correspondent Hallie Jackson. Hallie, good morning. This is unorthodox. We have not seen this before. An announcement on Twitter. It's — it's not video. It's audio, correct?

HALLIE JACKSON: Yeah. There's not going to be that visual when he first sort of makes that announcement that he's running for president. It is definitely different, Savannah, but that is a feature and not a bug in the eyes of the people around DeSantis, in his camp. As one person close to him tells me, in this media environment where it's about grabbing headlines, trying to dominate attention, they think that Governor DeSantis will do that here with Elon Musk. There's also the alignment of DeSantis with Musk, who has — as the world's — you know, one of the world's richest men, positioned himself as this conservative champion of free speech, of these so-called culture war issues. They think that is going to resonate here. This is not without risk, Savannah. I mean, this is unpredictable. It is an unpredictable setting. There is a possibility that DeSantis may end up upstaged by Elon Musk. That's out there. And it is a platform — right — that Donald Trump used to launch himself to the presidential Now here you have DeSantis looking to co-opt this for his own purposes.

GUTHRIE: Let's talk about — let's talk, Hallie, where the race is because right after those disappointing midterms for Republicans that some in the kind of political classes were blaming on Donald Trump, DeSantis was looking pretty good in the polls. But since that time, he's actually been in a downward trajectory and Trump has been on the rise.

JACKSON: Yeah. As they sort of say in the world of politics, Savannah, his altitude has descended. And you see it here, right, where he was in April compared to where he was back in February. Over the spring, Donald Trump has gone up in polling. Ron DeSantis has gone down in polling. You see that in some of the most recent numbers. 49 percent for Trump. 21 percent for DeSantis. Now, he is the only other Republican at the moment who is registering at at least that level. And folks that I talk to close to him brush this off, pointing out it is a long campaign. It is not unexpected, necessarily. Obviously, I'm sure they want the numbers to be better than where they are. But keep in mind, we don't even have the full Republican field yet, Savannah. We expect at least one more person to come out, Mike Pence, and announce his run for the presidency. We haven't hit the first debate. As you said, 75 weeks until election day. We got a ways to go.

GUTHRIE: 75 weeks, but who's counting, Hallie? Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

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8:00:26 a.m [TEASE]

11 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: In the Mix]

GUTHRIE: Coming up, in the mix.

DESANTIS CAMPAIGN AD: But is it worth the fight?

GUTHRIE: Florida governor Ron DeSantis ready to launch his presidential run today on Twitter. The details on how the 2024 race is starting to take shape.

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8:02:38 a.m.

1 minute and 25 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: DeSantis Set to Launch 2024 Run]

GUTHRIE: Florida Republican Ron DeSantis expected to enter the 2024 presidential race today. NBC's Dasha Burns joins us from Miami with the details of a pretty unconventional rollout. Dasha, good morning.

DASHA BURNS: Yeah, Savannah, that's right. And, look, even before officially jumping into the race, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis was the only Republican registering in polling compared to former President Trump, making him a frequent target of Mr. Trump's attacks. So, it may come as no surprise that just this morning that Mr. Trump is now reacting on his own social media platform to the news of this upcoming announcement, taking credit for DeSantis's win in the Florida governor's race and calling him disloyal. Governor DeSantis, though, has so far avoided attacking the former President but, tonight, he will be announcing his campaign on a platform that was once Mr. Trump's domain. Three sources familiar with the planning tell NBC News DeSantis will make his long-expected presidential aspirations public in a conversation with billionaire Elon Musk on Twitter Spaces, the website's platform for audio chats. It's an unconventional approach to announcing a White House bid. But we do expect a more traditional campaign rollout will be coming with a launch video and some trips to early states planned next week, Savannah.

GUTHRIE: Alright, Dasha, thank you very much.