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Sarah Palin to collide with Mitt Romney rollout in New Hampshire

(33)



Sarah Palin, flanked by her daughter, Piper, and her mother, Sally Heath, visits Boston's Old North Church Thursday. (Steven Senne/AP)

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Reporting from Washington —

Sarah Palin will be casting a long shadow over Mitt Romney's day in the sun in New Hampshire on Thursday.

She's bringing her I-haven't-made-up-my-mind-yet bus tour across America to the Granite State even as Romney formally declares he's in the 2012 race.



Poll: The Sarah Palin Magical Mystery Tour [VOTE]



Donald Trump: Sarah Palin would 'love to get me back' in presidential race



Sarah Palin's bus tour steals spotlight from GOP presidential candidates

Palin will attend a coastal clambake Thursday evening with some key New Hampshire Republicans. According to Politico, she called the timing "coincidental."

Palin is spending much of the day in Boston. She visited the Old North Church early Thursday.

The ex-Alaska governor, who is winding up her weeklong tour, told the assembled media throng that has doggedly followed her every move from the Pentagon parking lot to the Freedom Trail that she still doesn't know if she's running for president in 2012.

"Still looking at the field, knowing there's going to be a lot of shakeup in that lineup," Palin said

Romney will be delivering a speech in Stratham, N.H. Palin said, "Maybe we'll run into him."

Palin hasn't been going out of her way to make friends in the early primary state. Earlier this week in an interview with CNN, she said that New Hampshire voters aren't particularly special.

"I guess that's that nonpolitician in me not looking at a New Hampshire voter any differently just because they have, you know, an earlier primary than somebody else," she said.

The editorial page editor of the influential Union Leader newspaper in Manchester, Drew Cline, has been openly critical of Palin's guerilla tour on Twitter, saying that her devil-may-care approach to scheduling inconveniences her supporters.

The clambake may be Palin's way of making amends — and laying some foundation for a presidential run, the kind of work she is regularly accused of not doing.

Palin's tour was also derided Wednesday evening by Steve Schmidt, a former advisor to Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign — the one that you might remember featured Palin as the vice presidential nominee.

On CNN's "In the Arena," Schmidt lumped Palin in with Donald Trump and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich as 2012 nonfactors.

"Well, clearly, it's — none of them are going to be president of the United States," Schmidt said. "None of them is going to be the Republican nominee. But you've had this theater of the absurd taking place over the course of much of the spring. In there somewhere is a serious campaign waiting to get started."

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