

Report: Republicans least like Romney

by UPI

TAMPA -- Among U.S. Republican presidential contenders, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney has become the punching bag, the New York Times said. In the run-up to their debate in Tampa, Fla., Thursday, Romney's rivals have mounted a growing campaign of derision against him, the newspaper said. Romney's attacks on opponents in television commercials, sizeable bankroll and a perception of him as an "ideological panderer" were cited as reasons for the dislike, the newspaper said. Ed Rollins, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee's campaign chairman, told the Times Romney brought out his dark side. "What I have to do is make sure that my anger with a guy like Romney, whose teeth I want to knock out, doesn't get in the way of my thought process," Rollins said. However, Romney campaign spokesman Kevin Madden said the attention was expected. "I think it's largely driven by the fact that everybody's taught to tackle the guy on the field with the ball," he said.

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