



President Scores Highly:

Voting Record of '81 Shows The Romance and Fidelity of Reagan Honeymoon on Hill

The blush of President Reagan's honeymoon with Congress shines brightly from Congressional Quarterly's annual study of presidential support — a measure of how often congressional votes matched the president's announced positions in 1981.

On roll-call votes where the president declared an opinion, he and the House agreed 72.4 percent of the time, he and the Senate 88.3 percent of the time.

Thanks to the fact that the Republican-run Senate staged many more roll calls than the House in 1981, Reagan's overall score was 82.4 percent. Not since the administration of Lyndon B. Johnson (who had a 93 percent score in 1965) had the CQ study registered such harmony.

But while the study reflects Reagan's first-year success on Capitol Hill, it is not a measure of how much of his program was approved. And as a measure of an individual lawmaker's loyalty to the White House, the study should be used with caution.

First, the study counts only issues that reach a roll-call vote on the House or Senate floor. Elements of the White

House agenda that are abandoned or defeated before they reach the floor, that are quietly compromised, or that breeze through on a voice vote are not counted.

Second, the study counts only votes where the president has indicated clear, personal support or opposition, usually in messages to Congress, press conference remarks or other public statements. In some cases, an executive branch department or White House lobbyists may work actively on legislation without the president expressing a public position.

Third, all votes are given equal weight. The study does not distinguish major votes from minor ones, close calls from lopsided decisions, or administration initiatives from proposals born on Capitol Hill. (*Ground rules, box, p. 20-C*)

Thus the Senate's narrow approval of Reagan's decision to sell advanced weapons to Saudi Arabia (H Con Res 335), his most hotly contested foreign policy initiative, counted the same as the unanimous, pro forma ratification of the U.S.-Canadian Maritime Boundary Treaty.

Thirty-three of the 128 Senate votes counted in the study were to confirm Reagan nominations, most of them non-controversial. All of the nominations that were brought to a floor vote were confirmed, contributing more than 4 percentage points to Reagan's Senate support score.

Many Roll Calls

Finally, issues that Congress took many roll calls to resolve may influence the study more than issues settled by a single vote. The classic recent example was in 1978, when President Carter's Senate support score was dramatically enhanced by winning 55 roll calls — mostly procedural — related to ratification of the Panama Canal treaties.

In 1981, some issues were so thorny that Congress took several roll calls to find a winning formula. For example, 11 of the roll calls counted here related to government treatment of dairy farmers, giving that subject extra importance in the calculation of Reagan's support score.

A reporter or researcher interested in how an individual member of Congress voted on the administration's program is advised to look at the specifics of the member's legislative behavior, including his or her record on CQ's selection of 1981 key votes. (*Key votes, p. 3-C*)

Background

The presidential support score is a rough measure of the comity between Congress and the president — how often Congress voted the way the president wanted or, conversely, how often he endorsed what Congress did.

Over a period of time, the score reflects numerically the rises and dips in relations between the two branches of government, and individual scores show how members of Congress generally fit the trends. (*Individual senators' 1981 scores, p. 24-C; House members' scores, pp. 22-C, 23-C*)

The study, begun in 1953, was long billed as an indicator of the president's success on Capitol Hill. The first study, of Dwight D. Eisenhower's maiden year in the White House, was advertised as "testing congressional support for his program and leadership" and measuring acceptance of "the chief executive's proposals."

Success Rate

Following are the annual percentages of presidential victories since 1953 on congressional votes where the presidents took a clear-cut position:

Eisenhower		Nixon	
1953	89.0%	1969	74.0%
1954	82.8	1970	77.0
1955	75.0	1971	75.0
1956	70.0	1972	66.0
1957	68.0	1973	50.6
1958	76.0	1974	59.6
1959	52.0		
1960	65.0	Ford	
		1974	58.2%
Kennedy		1975	61.0
1961	81.0%	1976	53.8
1962	85.4		
1963	87.1	Carter	
		1977	75.4%
Johnson		1978	78.3
1964	88.0%	1979	76.8
1965	93.0	1980	75.1
1966	79.0		
1967	79.0	Reagan	
1968	75.0	1981	82.4%

A closer reading of the study's ground rules showed its limitations as a measure of executive clout, but not all readers have been discriminating in using the figures.

During the 1980 presidential campaign, President Carter's supporters, citing his 77 percent support score in 1979, claimed that Congress had passed four-fifths of the Carter agenda. A Carter aide later conceded that CQ's statistics had been "mistranslated or misused." The aide claimed, however, that the study itself was "reasonably misleading." (*Carter claims, 1980 Weekly Report p. 3098; Carter 1980 score, 1980 Almanac p. 17-C*)

Until 1975 CQ also published an annual "boxscore" of presidential victories and losses, tallying all specific legislative requests from the White House and computing the percentage passed by Congress. That practice was ended because CQ editors decided it was a dubious measure of a president's record.

Reagan and Predecessors

In his maiden year, Reagan and Congress were in agreement on 55 of 76 votes in the House and 113 of 128 votes in the Senate, by CQ's count.

The highest score since CQ began its study was Johnson's 93 percent in 1965, the lowest Richard M. Nixon's 50.6 percent in 1973, during the Watergate era.

It is usual, but not always true, that presidents fare better in the first years of their terms than at the end. Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon and Ford all showed declining presidential support scores late in their terms.

In Carter's case, however, the scores remained fairly steady for all four years, though the popular wisdom held that his relations with Congress had deteriorated.

In 1981, the study was heavily weighted toward budget votes — an indicator of the year's legislative obsession.

The process of reconciliation alone, just one crucial step in Reagan's attempt to force budgetary discipline, accounted for 33 of the 204 votes. Reagan's position pre-

vailed on all but four of them.

Tax cut legislation contributed another 13 roll calls to the study, all of which went Reagan's way. Budget resolutions, appropriations bills, spending authorizations and the debt limit added to the list of economic roll calls.

Party Support

Republicans, predictably, agreed with Reagan more often than Democrats did. What was unusual, however, was the degree of fealty to Reagan in the GOP-led Senate.

Senate Republicans, on average, voted with Reagan on 80 percent of the roll calls counted. No other president had commanded such loyalty from members of his own party in either house since CQ began its study 29 years earlier.

Even Democrat Lyndon Johnson, renowned for his command of Congress in the early years of his presidency, never had more than 77 percent support from House Democrats or 63 percent from Senate Democrats.

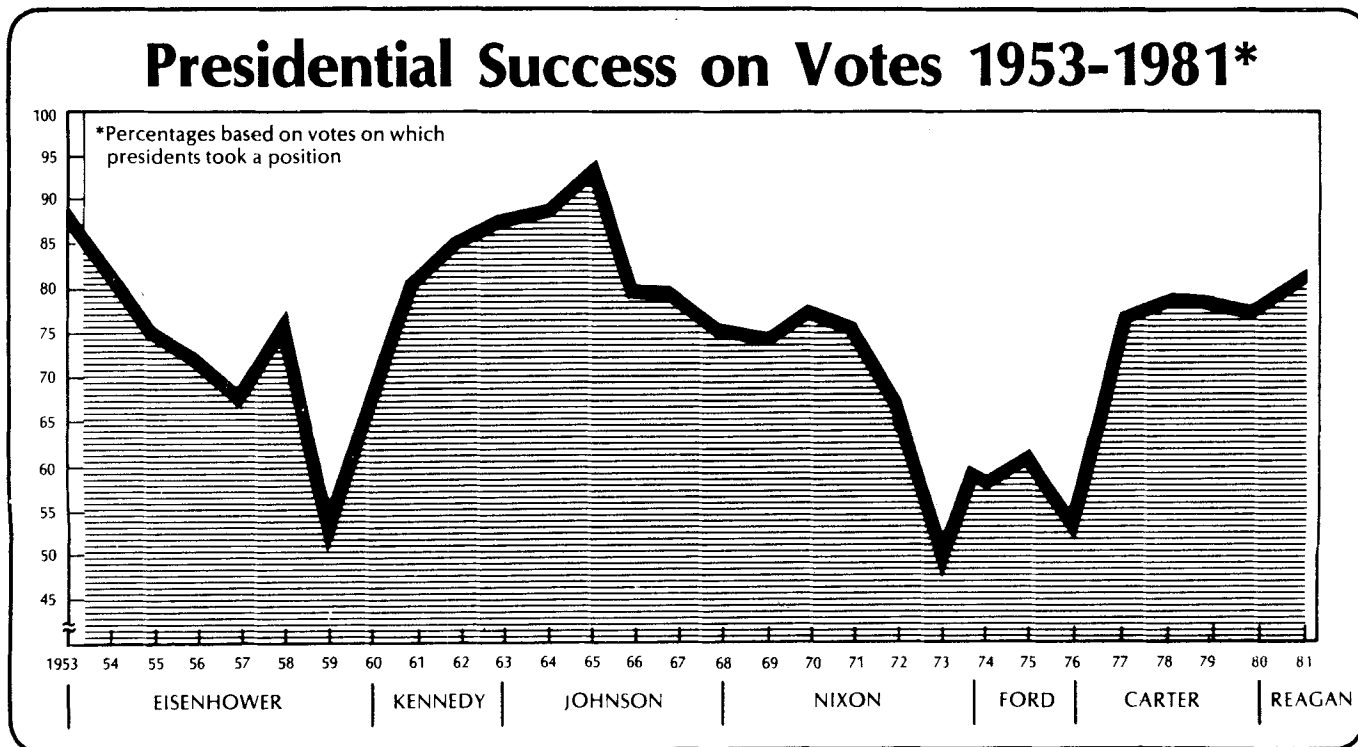
With 2-to-1 majorities in both houses, Johnson could be more tolerant of stragglers than Reagan, with his scant 53-47 Senate majority.

The Republican discipline in 1981 was even more evident among the crew of senators elected in 1980. The average support score for the 16 new Republicans in the Senate was 82 percent.

Newcomers Mack Mattingly, R-Ga. (88 percent support), Slade Gorton, R-Wash., and Dan Quayle, R-Ind., (both 87 percent) were among the top 10 Senate loyalists. None of the Republican Senate newcomers agreed with Reagan less than 76 percent of the time.

Majority Leader Howard H. Baker Jr., R-Tenn., who was responsible for much of that discipline, voted with the president on 89 percent of the votes studied, a figure surpassed only by Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., and Richard G. Lugar, R-Ind.

Sen. Paul Laxalt, R-Nev., often described as the president's closest confidant in Congress, voted with his White



Ground Rules for CQ Presidential Support-Opposition

Presidential Issues — CQ tries to determine what the president personally, as distinct from other administration officials, does and does not want in the way of legislative action by analyzing his messages to Congress, press conference remarks and other public statements and documents.

Borderline Cases — By the time an issue reaches a vote, it may differ from the original form in which the president expressed himself. In such cases, CQ analyzes the measure to determine whether, on balance, the features favored by the president outweigh those he opposed or vice versa. Only then is the vote classified.

Some Votes Excluded — Occasionally, important measures are so extensively amended on the floor that it is impossible to characterize final passage as a victory or defeat for the president.

Procedural Votes — Votes on motions to recommit, to reconsider or to table often are key tests that govern the legislative outcome. Such votes are necessarily included in the presidential support tabulations.

Appropriations — Generally, votes on passage of appropriations bills are not included in the tabulations, since it is rarely possible to determine the president's position on the overall revisions Congress almost invariably makes in the sums allowed. Votes on amendments to cut or increase specific funds requested in the president's budget, however, are included.

Failure to Vote — In tabulating the support or opposition scores of members on the selected presidential-issue votes, CQ counts only "yea" and "nay" votes on the ground that only these affect the outcome. Most failures to vote reflect absences because of illness or official business. Failures to vote lower both support and opposition scores equally.

Weighting — All presidential-issue votes have equal statistical weight in the analysis.

Changed Positions — Presidential support is determined by the position of the president at the time of a vote, even though that position may be different from an earlier position, or may have been reversed after the vote was taken.

House friend three times out of four — not exactly the behavior of a maverick, but below average for his party's senators in general and Western Republicans in particular.

'Weevils, Moths'

Broken down by region, the presidential support scores illustrate the widely reported growth of two intra-party factions, the conservative Southern "Boll Weevils," and the Republican moderate "Gypsy Moths" of the Northeast and Midwest.

Reagan drew his strongest Democratic support from the Boll Weevils. Of the 10 Senate Democrats most often in agreement with the president, eight came from the South (the other two from Nebraska). In the House, 21 of the 22 most supportive Democrats came from the South.

The top Democratic defectors included Texas Charles W. Stenholm, coordinator of the Conservative Democratic Forum (75 percent with Reagan); Phil Gramm, cosponsor of Reagan's reconciliation bill (75 percent); and Kent Hance, cosponsor of Reagan's tax bill (71 percent).

Reagan's Republican opponents tended to be from the ranks of the Gypsy Moths. The 21 House Republicans and the 12 Senate Republicans who most often voted in opposition to him all came from the Northeast or Midwest.

Among them were the co-chairmen of the House Gypsy Moths, Carl D. Pursell, Mich. (45 percent opposition), and Bill Green, N.Y. (39 percent).

State Scores

The average scores for each state show, not surprisingly, that the Republican delegations were most inclined to vote with the president, the Democratic delegations most likely to vote against him.

The most consistent support came, in the Senate, from the all-Republican delegations of Indiana (88 percent), Utah (87 percent), Wyoming (86 percent), Iowa, Kansas,

New Mexico and North Carolina (all 84 percent).

In the House, the highest average support scores were in Idaho (76 percent; two Republicans), Virginia (75 percent; one Democrat, nine Republicans), Utah (72 percent; two Republicans), Nebraska (70 percent; three Republicans) and South Carolina (70 percent; two Democrats, four Republicans). But Alabama's House delegation, with four Democrats and three Republicans, had one of the highest levels of support, 70 percent.

Average Scores

Following are composites of Democratic and Republican scores for 1981 and 1980:

	1981		1980	
	Dem.	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.
SUPPORT				
Senate	49%	80%	62%	45%
House	42	68	63	40
OPPOSITION				
Senate	45	15	25	45
House	50	26	26	50

Regional Averages

SUPPORT

Regional presidential support scores for 1981; scores for 1980 are in parentheses:

	East	West	South	Midwest
DEMOCRATS				
Senate	40% (64)	46% (60)	60% (61)	46% (63)
House	35 (65)	38 (65)	56 (57)	36 (66)
REPUBLICANS				
Senate	74 (53)	82 (40)	85 (43)	81 (48)
House	64 (47)	70 (35)	73 (37)	67 (41)

OPPOSITION

Regional presidential opposition scores for 1981; scores for 1980 are in parentheses:

	East	West	South	Midwest
DEMOCRATS				
Senate	52% (21)	44% (21)	35% (28)	49% (27)
House	57 (23)	54 (23)	37 (33)	57 (24)
REPUBLICANS				
Senate	21 (36)	11 (50)	11 (51)	16 (44)
House	31 (44)	21 (51)	22 (56)	29 (49)

High Scorers — Support

Highest individual scorers in presidential support — those who voted for the president's position most often in 1981:

SENATE

Democrats	Republicans
Byrd, Va.* 79%	Thurmond, S.C. 90%
Stennis, Miss. 70	Lugar, Ind. 90
Bentsen, Texas 70	Baker, Tenn. 89
Heflin, Ala. 68	Mattingly, Ga. 88
Johnston, La. 68	Garn, Utah 88
Long, La. 66	Hatch, Utah 87
Zorinsky, Neb. 61	Gorton, Wash. 87
Boren, Okla. 60	Quayle, Ind. 87
Nunn, Ga. 59	Warner, Va. 87
	Jepsen, Iowa 87

* Elected as an independent, but caucuses with Democrats.

HOUSE

Democrats	Republicans
Montgomery, Miss. 78%	Lott, Miss. 84%
Daniel, Va. 78	Cheney, Wyo. 83
Shelby, Ala. 76	Shumway, Calif. 83
Stenholm, Texas 75	Daniel, Va. 82
Gramm, Texas 75	Lagomarsino, Calif. 82
Hutto, Fla. 74	Robinson, Va. 80
Ireland, Fla. 74	Hansen, Idaho 80
Stump, Ariz. 74	Michel, Ill. 80
Chappell, Fla. 71	Smith, Ala. 80
Hance, Texas 71	

1981 Presidential Position Votes

Following is a list of all Senate and House recorded votes in 1981 on which President Reagan took a position. The votes, listed by CQ vote number, appear in the vote charts in the 1981 Weekly Reports.

Senate Votes (128)

Presidential Victories (113) — 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 40, 43, 44, 47, 49, 50, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 69, 72, 74, 77, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 120, 121, 125, 128, 132, 135, 139, 145, 149, 156, 160, 162, 164, 182, 189, 190, 201, 211, 212, 213, 239, 243, 244, 245, 247, 248, 251, 252, 258, 262, 267, 270, 271, 272, 273, 287, 288, 290, 291, 295, 302, 309, 321, 326, 335, 350, 352, 353, 371, 376, 388, 403, 417, 431, 432, 434, 453, 468, 472, 473.

Presidential Defeats (15) — 33, 45, 46, 58, 66, 151, 152, 153, 157, 275, 314, 340, 341, 342, 351.

House Votes (76)

Presidential Victories (55) — 7, 11, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 41, 46, 52, 95, 96, 97, 98, 101, 102, 104, 118, 128, 147, 148, 149, 150, 157, 159, 160, 165, 166, 167, 179, 192, 193, 198, 205, 207, 219, 240, 255, 257, 260, 263, 277, 278, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 322, 329, 330, 331, 347, 350, 351.

Presidential Defeats (21) — 32, 38, 47, 48, 50, 51, 69, 83, 87, 234, 239, 241, 243, 244, 258, 261, 262, 264, 266, 285, 344.

High Scorers — Opposition

Highest individual scorers in presidential opposition — those who voted most often against his position in 1981:

SENATE

Democrats	Republicans
Levin, Mich. 63%	Weicker, Conn. 30%
Eagleton, Mo. 63	Mathias, Md. 27
Sarbanes, Md. 61	Roth, Del. 24
Riegle, Mich. 60	Durenberger, Minn. 24
Kennedy, Mass. 60	Pressler, S.D. 24
Leahy, Vt. 60	Chafee, R.I. 23
Dodd, Conn. 59	Specter, Pa. 22
Metzenbaum, Ohio 59	Heinz, Pa. 20
Hart, Colo. 57	Kasten, Wis. 20
Biden, Del. 54	

HOUSE

Democrats	Republicans
Gejdenson, Conn. 76%	Jeffords, Vt. 55%
Kastenmeier, Wis. 75	Schneider, R.I. 50
Ottinger, N.Y. 74	Erdahl, Minn. 46
Brodhead, Mich. 74	Pursell, Mich. 45
Bonior, Mich. 74	Heckler, Mass. 43
Kildee, Mich. 74	Conte, Mass. 42
Wolpe, Mich. 72	Leach, Iowa 42
Edgar, Pa. 72	
Yates, Ill. 71	

						KEY
1	2	1	2	1	2	
ALABAMA		IOWA		NEW HAMPSHIRE		† Not eligible for all recorded votes in 1981 (sworn in after Jan. 5, died or resigned during session, or voted "present" to avoid possible conflict of interest).
<i>Denton</i>	85 9	<i>Grassley</i>	81 16	<i>Humphrey</i>	82 16	
<i>Heflin</i>	68 30	<i>Jepsen</i>	87 12	<i>Rudman</i>	83 14	
ALASKA		KANSAS		NEW JERSEY		
<i>Murkowski</i>	82 11	<i>Dole</i>	85 7	<i>Bradley</i>	44 48	
<i>Stevens</i>	76 14	<i>Kassebaum</i>	82 17	<i>Williams</i>	38 41	
ARIZONA		KENTUCKY		NEW MEXICO		
<i>Goldwater</i>	63 11	<i>Ford</i>	56 44	<i>Domenici</i>	84 13	
<i>DeConcini</i>	51† 38†	<i>Huddleston</i>	54 44	<i>Schmitt</i>	84 9	
ARKANSAS		LOUISIANA		NEW YORK		
<i>Bumpers</i>	39 52	<i>Johnston</i>	68 26	<i>D'Amato</i>	82 14	
<i>Pryor</i>	47 48	<i>Long</i>	66 24	<i>Moynihan</i>	41 47	
CALIFORNIA		MAINE		NORTH CAROLINA		
<i>Hayakawa</i>	84 5	<i>Cohen</i>	76 19	<i>East</i>	84 13	
<i>Cranston</i>	38 48	<i>Mitchell</i>	45 51	<i>Helms</i>	84 16	
COLORADO		MARYLAND		NORTH DAKOTA		
<i>Armstrong</i>	84 13	<i>Mathias</i>	58 27	<i>Andrews</i>	77 19	
<i>Hart</i>	35 57	<i>Sarbanes</i>	38 61	<i>Burdick</i>	52 46	
CONNECTICUT		MASSACHUSETTS		OHIO		
<i>Weicker</i>	59 30	<i>Kennedy</i>	31 60	<i>Glenn</i>	53 42	
<i>Dodd</i>	33 59	<i>Tsongas</i>	38 49	<i>Metzenbaum</i>	30 59	
DELAWARE		MICHIGAN		OKLAHOMA		
<i>Roth</i>	75 24	<i>Levin</i>	35 63	<i>Nickles</i>	85 13	
<i>Biden</i>	44 54	<i>Riegle</i>	34 60	<i>Boren</i>	60 35	
FLORIDA		MINNESOTA		OREGON		
<i>Hawkins</i>	84 14	<i>Boschwitz</i>	82 18	<i>Hatfield</i>	76 19	
<i>Chiles</i>	55 37	<i>Durenberger</i>	73 24	<i>Packwood</i>	86 13	
GEORGIA		MISSISSIPPI		PENNSYLVANIA		
<i>Mattingly</i>	88 12	<i>Cochran</i>	82 9	<i>Heinz</i>	74 20	
<i>Nunn</i>	59 31	<i>Stennis</i>	70 27	<i>Specter</i>	77 22	
HAWAII		MISSOURI		RHODE ISLAND		
<i>Inouye</i>	47 44	<i>Danforth</i>	85 13	<i>Chafee</i>	75 23	
<i>Matsunaga</i>	47 49	<i>Eagleton</i>	33 63	<i>Pell</i>	42 52	
IDAHO		MONTANA		SOUTH CAROLINA		
<i>McClure</i>	79 15	<i>Baucus</i>	45 50	<i>Thurmond</i>	90 7	
<i>Symms</i>	80 13	<i>Melcher</i>	43 41	<i>Hollings</i>	54 38	
ILLINOIS		NEBRASKA		SOUTH DAKOTA		
<i>Percy</i>	84 9	<i>Exon</i>	56 41	<i>Abdnor</i>	79 19	
<i>Dixon</i>	57 41	<i>Zorinsky</i>	61 31	<i>Pressler</i>	61 24	
INDIANA		NEVADA		TENNESSEE		
<i>Lugar</i>	90 9	<i>Laxalt</i>	76 8	<i>Baker</i>	89 10	
<i>Quayle</i>	87 13	<i>Cannon</i>	55 29	<i>Sasser</i>	57 40	
						TEXAS
						<i>Tower</i>
						76 9
						<i>Bentsen</i>
						70 24
						UTAH
						<i>Garn</i>
						88 9
						<i>Hatch</i>
						87 11
						VERMONT
						<i>Stafford</i>
						72 17
						<i>Leahy</i>
						34 60
						VIRGINIA
						<i>Warner</i>
						87 13
						<i>Byrd*</i>
						79 21
						WASHINGTON
						<i>Gorton</i>
						87 13
						<i>Jackson</i>
						55 43
						WEST VIRGINIA
						<i>Byrd</i>
						47 48
						<i>Randolph</i>
						45 48
						WISCONSIN
						<i>Kasten</i>
						80 20
						<i>Proxmire</i>
						52 48
						WYOMING
						<i>Simpson</i>
						86 11
						<i>Wallop</i>
						85 9

Democrats *Republicans*

* Byrd elected as an independent.

Presidential Support and Opposition: Senate

1. Reagan Support Score, 1981. Percentage of 128 Reagan-issue recorded votes in 1981 on which senator voted "yea" or "nay" in agreement with the president's position. Failures to vote lower both Support and Opposition scores.

2. Reagan Opposition Score, 1981. Percentage of 128 Reagan-issue recorded votes in 1981 on which senator voted "yea" or "nay" in disagreement with the president's position. Failures to vote lower both Support and Opposition scores.