

Crosby on the Ken campaign: where is it?

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2008/03/06/crosby-on-the-ken-campaign-where-is-it/

2008-3-6

The legendary Australian conservative campaign guru [Lynton Crosby](#) has been signed up by Tory London Mayoral candidate [Boris Johnston](#) and talking at the LSE today he gave the impression of man who thinks he is backing a winning horse. He says Ken's campaign is way off course:



“Ken didn't take Boris seriously early enough. He said he will go on his record but when you have been in power for a long time you have to offer people more. The longer you are in office the less you can go on your record. Ken has not defined his success in office and he has not established what is at risk if he loses. His campaign is all about Ken and not about the voter. He should motivate his base but he does not even mention the voter.”

Boris has edged ahead in some [opinion polls](#) (since Lynton signed up with him!) , no doubt helped by the [Lee Jasper](#) controversy. But I agree with Lynton that Ken's campaign has shown none of the verve and populism that we expect of this great maverick politician. One interesting case in point is the Olympics.



There are dangers in being the man who brought the Olympics to London. Many people are going through the traditional 'downer' phase when they worry about the costs rather than being bouyed up by the excitement. But winning the Games was a massive confirmation of London's status as a leading world city under Ken's rule. Shouldn't Livingstone be pointing out that Boris would be in charge at a time when the world's eyes will be on the capital? People may think Boris is fun – they may even like some his policies (can you name one?). But do they really want this eccentric figure to represent them at such as critical, historic moment?

 I think the whole Mayoral campaign is curious with neither main candidate standing on their strengths. Boris is trying to get us to take him seriously when his virtue is that he is not a normal politician. While Ken is showing lofty distain when most Londoners like him as a guy who gets down and dirty on behalf of himself and the city.

Everyone talks about the importance of the (pro-Boris) London Evening Standard in this campaign but remember that national newspapers (like the pro-Ken Guardian) have much bigger readerships in London. If and when the nationals get interested we may have a higher-profile scrap.

- Copyright © 2014 London School of Economics and Political Science