

Sarkozy, Royal in French runoff

by UPI

PARIS - The picture of who will be France's next president became clearer Sunday when Nicolas Sarkozy and Segolene Royal finished 1-2 in the first round of voting.

Sarkozy, a 52-year-old conservative and former interior minister, pulled in 29.6 percent of the votes cast. Royal, the 53-year-old Socialist Party's standard-bearer, garnered 25.1 percent.

The other two serious contenders, Francois Bayrou and Jean Marie Le Pen, received 18.7 percent and 11.5 percent, respectively.

Sarkozy and Royal, the first woman to get this far in a French presidential election, will go head-to-head in a runoff May 6.

Voter turnout Sunday reached nearly 74 percent, surpassing the total from the last national election. The total represented the highest voter turnout for a first round of elections in France since 1981.

The more than 1 million new registered voters also made history, as the increase was the largest in the last 25 years.

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Sarkozy, Royal in French runoff by UPI