

Argentina elections: Shock as Mauricio Macri forces Daniel Scioli into second round

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[Daniel Scioli](#) has failed to win outright in [Argentina](#)'s presidential election, being forced into a run-off by businessman [Mauricio Macri](#) and sparking a crisis for "Kirchneristas".

With [60 per cent of the votes counted](#), Mr Scioli, the front runner for the whole campaign, had won 34.7 per cent of support. Mr Macri had triumphed with 36.2 per cent, sparking gasps of shock from the watching media and dancing among Mr Macri's supporters.



Top opposition presidential candidate Mauricio Macri speaks to supporters in Buenos Aires

Photo: Victor R Caivano/AP

With almost 80 per cent counted Mr Scioli looked likely to edge to a slim victory, which would mark a deep disappointment for his team who expected to win comfortably.

Daniel Scioli greets supporters in Buenos Aires Photo: Natacha Pisarenko/AP

Whoever now wins the second round will become the first president elected through a run-off in Argentine history.

The only previous run-off, in 2003, was not completed as incumbent Carlos Menem dropped out, handing the presidency to Nestor Kirchner.

The elections, which will end 12 years of rule by Nestor and Cristina Kirchner, will go into a second round on November 22 - sparking wild celebrations among Mr Macri's supporters.

"Who said we couldn't do it? #SecondRound" tweeted Laurita Alonso, one of Mrs Kirchner's fiercest critics.

Maria Eugenia Vidal, elected governor of Buenos Aires province - one of the toughest and largest contests, where one in four Argentine voters live - said: "Today we made the impossible possible. We are making history."

Her win was particularly sweet for "Macristas" as she defeated Anibal Fernandez - a hated top Kirchner ally.

Mr Scioli knew he was in for a tough race.

A former [speedboat racing world champion](#), who lost his right arm in a boating accident which almost cost him his life, he has been governor of Buenos Aires province since 2007, and was vice president before that.

He has pledged to uphold the populist elements of "Kirchnerism," and was hand-picked by President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner as her successor. He benefited from her strong support - but it was not enough.



Supporters of presidential candidate Daniel Scioli react to the electoral results in Buenos Aires

Photo: Martin Acosta/Reuters

Mr Macri, the current mayor of Buenos Aires, is the son of Italian immigrants who went on to run a prosperous business conglomeration, with interests in construction.

Kidnapped for ransom by corrupt police, it was then that he decided to go into politics, but not before becoming the most successful president of Boca Juniors football club in their history.

He has campaigned on the promise of change: an end to the economic calamity and confrontational policies that have defined Mrs Kirchner's rule.

Supporters of Argentine presidential candidate Daniel Scioli await at the party's headquarters in Buenos Aires Photo: Getty Images

She leaves the Casa Rosada presidential palace on December 10 and has approval ratings of around 40 per cent – remarkable given how [divisive her rule has been](#), and how poorly-viewed internationally.

Mr Scioli and Mr Macri saw off Sergio Massa, the governor of Tigre, and three other candidates who only ever accounted for a fraction of the vote – Margarita Stolbizer, Nicolas del Cano, and Adolfo Rodriguez Saa.

Mr Scioli walked [a tightrope during his campaign](#), having to tread carefully to keep Mrs Kirchner's fanatical voters on side, but show that he would not just be her puppet.

Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner casts her vote at a polling station in Rio Gallegos, Argentina Photo: REUTERS/Andres Arces

Yet Mrs Kirchner has ensured that his vice president is one of her most loyal lieutenants – Carlos Zannini - and still controls the powerful Campora youth militia.

Her son Maximo was on course to be elected for the first time and now sits as representative in Santa Cruz, in Patagonia; her sister-in-law Alicia, one of her closest confidants who served as her welfare minister, looked likely, with 20 per cent of the votes counted, to become governor of the southern Santa Cruz province.

And much depends now on [what Mrs Kirchner decides to do next](#). She now will have to summon all her political powers to work for the election of Mr Scioli.

And beyond November 22, few believe she will retreat to her Patagonia home and content herself with changing her two-month-old granddaughter's nappies. Yet she did not seek election to Congress or the Senate, as her predecessors have commonly done. Her late husband Nestor Kirchner stepped down in 2007 and took up a role in Mercosur, the regional economic block.

Many suspect she may seek re-election in 2019.

Asked on Sunday, after casting her vote, what she planned to do next she replied: ["I am going to continue the fight."](#)

Now her fight will be tougher than ever.

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