

= The Boat Race 1973 =

The 119th Boat Race took place on 7 March 1973 . Held annually , the Boat Race is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge along the River Thames . It was won by Cambridge who passed the finishing post thirteen lengths ahead of Oxford , the largest winning margin since the 1955 race . Despite being pre @-@ race favourites , Oxford 's warm @-@ up saw them take on board a large amount of water in rough conditions .

In the reserve race , Goldie beat Isis , and in the Women 's Boat Race , Cambridge were victorious .

= = Background = =

The Boat Race is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing competition between the University of Oxford (sometimes referred to as the " Dark Blues ") and the University of Cambridge (sometimes referred to as the " Light Blues ") . First held in 1829 , the race takes place on the 4 @. @ 2 miles (6 @. @ 8 km) Championship Course on the River Thames in southwest London . The rivalry is a major point of honour between the two universities and followed throughout the United Kingdom and broadcast worldwide . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having beaten Oxford by a nine @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in the previous year 's race . Cambridge held the overall lead , with 66 victories to Oxford 's 51 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) . The race was umpired by former Oxford Blue Ronnie Howard who had rowed in the 1957 and 1959 races .

The first Women 's Boat Race took place in 1927 , but did not become an annual fixture until the 1960s . Up until 2014 , the contest was conducted as part of the Henley Boat Races , but as of the 2015 race , it is held on the River Thames , on the same day as the men 's main and reserve races . The reserve race , contested between Oxford 's Isis boat and Cambridge 's Goldie boat has been held since 1965 . It usually takes place on the Tideway , prior to the main Boat Race .

It was the first year since 1927 that the main race was not covered in full on any of the BBC 's national radio networks . Its 4.15pm start coincided with the conclusion of the FA Cup semi @-@ finals , and it had been decided that the rowing would be broadcast in full on the BBC World Service and BBC Radio Oxford only . Commentator John Snagge who had described every race since 1931 was disappointed : " I do not want to be unreasonable but I am a little surprised that for an event like the Boat Race , with its tradition and history , the BBC cannot find 20 minutes on one of its four networks to carry it in full . "

Oxford 's preparations for the race including coming second only to Leander Club in the Head of the River Race . Both crews had to cope with strong winds in their outings , with large pieces of driftwood providing additional hazards to the boats . Cambridge 's number four , Chris Baillieu , recovered from a back injury while his cox , Mike Williams , spent time before the race recuperating from an upset stomach . Their number seven , Steven Tourek , was also forced from the boat with illness , missing several days training . Cambridge were coxed by Lou Barry . Oxford 's boat , built by Swiss manufacturer Stämpfli was considered suitable for " placid Continental lakes " while Cambridge 's boat , while 30 pounds (14 kg) lighter than their previous year 's craft , had a deeper hull and was " better equipped " for inclement conditions . In an interview with Barry Norman writing for The Observer , Oxford 's stroke Sawyer had prophetically suggested : " if we do lose , I hope we 're not disgraced ... it would be a kind of tawdry end of the year to be in a crew that was beaten out of sight . "

= = Crews = =

The Cambridge crew weighed over 5 pounds (2 @. @ 3 kg) per rower more than their opponents . Oxford saw four former Blues return , Magarey , Hall , Payne and the cox Yalouris , while Cambridge welcomed back Chris Baillieu for his fourth race and Michael Hart . Oxford 's crew contained three non @-@ British competitors , Australian Magarey , and Americans Yalouris and Sawyer (who had rowed for Harvard University and the United States Olympic team in the 1972

Summer Olympics) , while Cambridge featured just one foreign participant , the American rower Tourek .

= = Race = =

Following good performances in practice in the buildup , Oxford were considered pre @-@ race favourites . They won the toss and elected to start on the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Cambridge . In the warm @-@ up to the race , the Light Blues opted for calm waters in Wandsworth Reach while Oxford rowed part of the course , in rough conditions , up to the Mile Post and back . Arriving back at the stake boat , the Dark Blues spent considerable time attempting to alleviate their boat of large amounts of water , using their tracksuits as makeshift sponges .

Oxford made a fast start , rating over 40 strokes per minute , but in the rough conditions it resulted in more water being drawn into their boat . Cambridge " slowly but surely " took control with a lead of just under three lengths within three minutes of the start . A ten @-@ second lead at the Mile Post was extended to sixteen seconds by Hammersmith Bridge with Oxford still taking on more water in their pursuit of the Light Blues . Oxford were 26 seconds behind at Chiswick Steps and despite a last push from Oxford to reduce the deficit , Cambridge passed the finishing post in 19 minutes 21 seconds , 13 lengths and 48 seconds ahead of their opponents . It was Cambridge 's sixth consecutive victory , and their 67th overall to Oxford 's 51 wins .

In the reserve race , Cambridge 's Goldie beat Oxford 's Isis by five lengths , their seventh consecutive victory . In the 28th running of the Women 's Boat Race , Cambridge triumphed , their eleventh consecutive victory .

= = Reaction = =

The Oxford boat club president Andy Hall said " the water was round our ankles ... we made a mistake in doing that warm @-@ up over part of the course ... there was so much water on board that I thought ' God , we 're going to sink . ' It was really hopeless after that . " In losing the race , Hall became the first Oxonian to lose four Boat Races in the 20th century . Jim Railton , writing in The Times summarised the race : " Cambridge beat the Tideway and the Tideway beat Oxford . " According to Dickie Burnell , " to say that the race was soon over would be a mis @-@ statement . It never really began . "