

= The Boat Race 1948 =

The 94th Boat Race took place on 27 March 1948 . 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 . In a race umpired by the former rower Claude Taylor , Cambridge won by five lengths in a record time of 17 minutes and 50 seconds , beating the existing record set in the 1934 race . The victory , their second in a row , took the overall record in the race to 50 ? 43 in Cambridge 's favour .

= = 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 ; it is followed throughout the United Kingdom and , as of 2014 , broadcast worldwide . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1947 race by ten lengths , and led overall with 50 victories to Oxford 's 43 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) .

Oxford 's coaches were R. E. Eason (who rowed for the Dark Blues in the 1924 race) , J. H. Page and D. T. Raikes (who represented Oxford in the 1920 , 1921 and 1922 races) . Cambridge were coached by F. E. Hellyer (who rowed for the Light Blues in the 1910 and 1911 races) , Kenneth Payne (who rowed for Cambridge in the 1932 and 1934 races) , Harold Rickett (a Light Blue three times between 1930 and 1932) and Peter Haig @-@ Thomas (a four @-@ time Light Blue between 1902 and 1905) . The umpire for the race was the former Cambridge rower Claude Taylor who had represented the Light Blues in the 1901 , 1902 and 1903 races .

The rowing correspondent for The Manchester Guardian anticipated a close race : " the prospects of Oxford and Cambridge for this year 's University Boat @-@ race on Saturday have now become much more even " . His counterpart at The Times was in agreement : " it really seems that whichever crew gets off best in the first two minutes will probably win the race . "

= = Crews = =

The Oxford crew weighed an average of 12 st 9 @. @ 375 lb (80 @. @ 3 kg) , 1 @. @ 375 pounds (0 @. @ 62 kg) per rower more than their opponents . Cambridge saw three rowers return to the crew with Boat Race experience , including their stroke A. P. Mellows . Oxford 's boat also contained three former Blues , J. R. W. Gleave , P. N. Brodie and A. J. R. Purssell , all of whom were making their third appearances . Three of the participants were registered as non @-@ British : Oxford 's G. C. Fisk and W. W. Woodward , and Cambridge 's Brian Harrison were all from Australia .

= = Race = =

Cambridge won the toss and elected to start from the Middlesex station , handing the Surrey side of the river to Oxford . The race was started at 3 : 30 p.m. by Taylor . The Light Blues out @-@ rated their opponents from the start but soon after their number six , Paul Bircher " caught a crab " , allowing Oxford to take a half @-@ length lead which they extended to three @-@ quarters of a length by Craven Steps . Despite having stopped to allow Bircher to recover his oar , Cambridge drew level and were over a quarter of a length ahead by the time the crews passed the Mile Post , yet nine seconds off record pace and rowing into a head wind . Cambridge were a length ahead at Harrods Furniture Depository and drew clear as the boats passed below Hammersmith Bridge .

As the crews passed the HMS Stork training ship , Cambridge began to draw away and were two lengths ahead by Chiswick Steps . With a strong tailwind along Corney Reach , the Light Blues continued to pull ahead and passed below Barnes Bridge four lengths ahead , and six seconds

ahead of the course record . Cambridge passed the finishing post five lengths ahead in a time of 17 minutes 50 seconds . The victory , Cambridge 's second in a row , and third in the last four races , took the overall record in the race to 50 ? 43 in their favour . The special correspondent writing in The Observer called it " the maddest Boat Race for years " . The Times 's rowing correspondent suggested it was " a great triumph for the Cambridge coaches , who so often seem able to produce something out of the bag which has not been apparent in practice . " Writing in The Manchester Guardian , the rowing correspondent noted that it was " strange that Cambridge had never shown anything like this form in practice " .