

## = The Boat Race 1863 =

The 20th Boat Race between crews from the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge took place on the River Thames on 28 March 1863 . Oxford won by 15 lengths in a time of 23 minutes 6 seconds . It took the overall record to ten wins each , the first time since the 1836 race that the scores were level . The race was the third to be held on the ebb tide , along the Championship Course in reverse , from Mortlake to Putney . It was the first time since the race was held in the fashion since the 1856 race .

## = 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 " ) . The race was first held in 1829 , and since 1845 has taken place on the 4 @.@ 2 @-@ mile ( 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 since the 21st century , is followed throughout the United Kingdom and broadcast worldwide . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1862 race by ten lengths , with Cambridge leading overall with ten victories to Oxford 's nine .

According to Drinkwater , neither boat club president was " sensible of their duty to posterity , for they kept no records of the training of the crews " . Both crews arrived at Putney on 21 March , one week before the race , and each put in four practice sessions in the run @-@ up to the main event . Cambridge 's boat was built by Searle . The race was umpired by Joseph William Chitty who had rowed for Oxford twice in 1849 ( in the March and December races ) and the 1852 race .

## = Crews =

The Oxford crew averaged over 6 feet ( 1 @.@ 83 m ) in height , and weighed an average of 11 st 8 @.@ 5 lb ( 73 @.@ 5 kg ) , 2 @.@ 75 pounds ( 1 @.@ 2 kg ) per rower more than their Light Blue opposition . Six of the Oxford crew had represented their university in the previous year 's race , including W. M. Hoare who was rowing at stroke for the third time . The Cambridge boat contained two members of the 1862 crew , including William Cecil Smyly and John Graham Chambers .

## = Race =

Oxford , who were clear pre @-@ race favourites , won the toss and elected to start from the Middlesex station , handing the Surrey side of the river to Cambridge . Like the 1856 race , the race was conducted on the ebb tide , and the start was moved to Barker 's Rails , to " give the steamers room between the Aqueduct and the crews " . The start of the race was delayed for around half an hour as a result of a number of steamers impinging upon the course . The future British King , Edward VII , was in attendance . At the time of the race , there was a mild breeze and the water was " perfect , but for the steamers . "

Cambridge made the better start , but Oxford 's steady rowing brought them level and within 300 yards ( 270 m ) of the start , they were nearly half @-@ a @-@ length up on the Light Blues . By Craven Steps , they were clear and two lengths up by the Mile Post . Oxford crossed over to row directly in front of Cambridge , and according to MacMichael , " it was evident here that the race was over , barring accidents . " The Dark Blues were three lengths up as they shot Barnes Bridge and won by fifteen lengths . It was Oxford 's third consecutive victory and took the overall total to ten wins each , the first time since the 1856 race that the scores were tied .