

= The Boat Race 1874 =

The 31st Boat Race took place on the 28 March 1874 . The Boat Race is an annual side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge along the River Thames . In a race umpired by former Oxford rower Joseph William Chitty , Cambridge won by three and a half lengths in their fifth consecutive victory .

= = 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 . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having defeated Oxford by three lengths in the previous year 's race , while Oxford led overall with sixteen wins to Cambridge 's fourteen .

Cambridge were coached by John Graham Chambers (who rowed for Cambridge in the 1862 and 1863 races , and was non @-@ rowing boat club president for the 1865 race) , William Henry Lowe (who rowed for Cambridge in the 1868 , 1870 and 1871 races) and John Goldie (the Cambridge boat club president and rower for the 1869 , 1870 and 1871 races) . Oxford 's coach was S. D. Darbishire (who rowed for the Dark Blues in 1868 , 1869 and 1870) .

Cambridge opted not to use the boat built for them by Harry Clasper specifically for the race , in favour of one constructed by Waites which had been used by 1st Trinity Boat Club . 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 , while the starter was Edward Searle .

= = Crews = =

The Cambridge crew weighed an average of 11 st 10 @. @ 625 lb (74 @. @ 5 kg) , 1 @. @ 5 pounds (0 @. @ 7 kg) more than their opponents . Oxford saw the return of two former Blues in William Edward Sherwood and A. W. Nicholson (who was rowing in his third Boat Race) . Cambridge 's crew included five Blues , with James Brooks Close and Charles Stokes Read returning for a third time .

The Light Blue crew included Australian George Francis Armytage , the only non @-@ British participant in the race , who had been educated at Geelong Grammar School . Author and former Oxford rower G. C. Drinkwater described the Oxford crew as " something of a disappointment " while declaring that Cambridge were " a very fine crew " .

= = Race = =

Cambridge won the toss and elected to start from the Middlesex side of the river , handing the Surrey station to Oxford . The race started at 11.14am and was " rowed on an exceptionally sluggish tide " . Cambridge made a good start and held a half @-@ length lead at Hammersmith Bridge . As the bend of the river began to give advantage to the Surrey side , Oxford drew back into contention and the crews were level at the bottom of Chiswick Reach . The position of moored barges provided a good course and smooth water for the Dark Blues who took a half @-@ length lead .

Despite this , fatigue began to set in to the Oxford crew and Cambridge came back into contention . With a steady rhythm , the Light Blues were level at the Bathing Place of Athens and held a clear water advantage by The Bull 's Head pub . A length ahead by Barnes Bridge , Cambridge pulled further ahead to win by three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 22 minutes 35 seconds . It was Cambridge 's fifth consecutive victory and took the overall record to 16 ? 15 in favour of Oxford .