

= The Boat Race 1890 =

The 47th Boat Race took place in 1890 . Held annually , it is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge along the River Thames . The race , umpired by former Oxford rower Frank Willan) was won by Oxford . They passed the finishing post one length ahead of Cambridge in a time of 22 minutes 3 seconds , and took their overall lead in the event to 24 ? 22 .

= Background =

The Boat Race is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing competition between the boat clubs of 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 ; as of 2014 it is followed throughout the United Kingdom and broadcast worldwide . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having beaten Oxford by seven lengths in the previous year 's race , while Oxford held the overall lead , with 23 victories to Cambridge 's 22 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) .

Oxford 's coaches were F. P. Bully , F. Fenner , William Grenfell (who rowed for Oxford in the 1877 and 1878 races , and was non @-@ rowing boat club president in the 1879 race) and Frederick Smith , 2nd Viscount Hambleden . There is no record of who coached Cambridge . The Light Blues began their practice on 9 January , nearly two weeks ahead of Oxford , but it was not until 4 March that Cambridge persuaded James Cardwell Gardner to return as stroke . They improved and were considered by author and former Oxford rower George Drinkwater to be " by no means a bad crew , though deficient in length and watermanship " . Despite William Fletcher being considered " one of the greatest sixes " , and although " no greater worker has ever rowed " , he was positioned at stroke .

The umpire for the race for the second year in a row was Frank Willan who won the event four consecutive times , rowing for Oxford in the 1866 , 1867 , 1868 and 1869 races .

= Crews =

Both crews weighed an average of 12 st 1 @.@ 5 lb (76 @.@ 7 kg) . Cambridge saw three former Blues return , including Stanley Muttelbury who was rowing in his fifth consecutive Boat Race . Oxford 's crew contained five rowers with experience of the event , including W. F. C. Holland in his fourth race , along with the cox John Pemberton Heywood @-@ Lonsdale who had steered the Dark Blues in 1889 .

= Race =

Cambridge were considered slight favourites for the race , and won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Oxford . While the weather was fine , a westerly wind made for rough conditions between Hammersmith Bridge and Barnes Bridge . Commencing at 4.44pm , Cambridge made the faster start , outrating the Dark Blues by two strokes per minute , and held a quarter @-@ of @-@ a @-@ length lead after two minutes . Despite the bend of the river favouring Oxford , the Light Blues held their lead and at the Crab Tree pub , began to pull further ahead as the course favoured them .

By Hammersmith Bridge , the lead was half @-@ a @-@ length but the wind appeared to affect Oxford and by The Doves pub , Cambridge were nearly clear . Oxford reduced the deficit along Chiswick Reach and by Chiswick Steps were nearly level . In more sheltered water , the Dark Blues pushed ahead and were almost clear by Barnes Bridge but Cambridge kept in touch . Oxford passed the finishing post with a lead of one length in a time of 22 minutes 3 seconds . It was Oxford

's first victory since the 1885 race , their narrowest winning margin for 23 years and the slowest winning time for either university since the 1878 race .