

## = The Boat Race 1998 =

The 144th Boat Race took place on 28 March 1998 . 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 . Cambridge , with the heaviest crew in the history of the event , won by three lengths in a record time of 16 minutes 19 seconds .

In the reserve race , Oxford 's Isis defeated Cambridge 's Goldie in a time which equalled the record , while Cambridge won the Women 's Boat 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 " ) . First held in 1829 , the race takes 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 followed throughout the United Kingdom and broadcast worldwide . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1997 race by two lengths , and led overall with 74 victories to Oxford 's 68 ( excluding the " dead heat " of 1877 ) .

The first Women 's Boat Race took place in 1927 , but did not become an annual fixture until the 1960s . 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 .

Oxford boat club president Andrew Lindsay acknowledged the weight difference : " We are quite happy , it presents a challenge . They have got the equivalent of another cox to carry along . " Cambridge 's president David Cassidy ( who would row for Goldie ) was blunt in his assessment : " A powerful car will beat a less powerful car . " Cambridge , coached by Robin Williams , suffered a setback : their number five , Toby Wallace , was ill in the run @-@ in to the race , and did not participate in the outings just prior to the main event . Despite that , The Times reported that the Light Blue boat looked " ominously powerful " .

The race was sponsored for the final time by Beefeater Gin who had invested £ 1 @.@ 4 million in the event over the previous three @-@ year contract period . They would be replaced by Aberdeen Asset Management for the 1999 race .

## = = Crews = =

The official weigh @-@ in was held at The Hurlingham Club in London on 23 March . The Cambridge crew , the heaviest in the history of the Boat Race , weighed an average of 13 pounds ( 5 @.@ 9 kg ) per rower more than their opponents , the second @-@ largest disparity between the Universities since 1829 . Oxford saw five members of their 1997 crew return , while Cambridge welcomed back two in Brad Crombie and Alex Story . Two German world champions rowed for Cambridge : Stefan Forster and Marc Weber won gold in the men 's eight at the 1995 World Rowing Championships .

## = = Race = =

Cambridge were pre @-@ race favourite for the sixth consecutive year . Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Middlesex station , only the eighth time such a decision has been made since 1945 . The river conditions were described as " smooth " . Despite holding a brief early lead , a series of blade clashes disrupted Oxford and Cambridge 's cox Potts called for a push which saw his boat pass the Mile Post with a canvas ' lead . At Hammersmith Bridge , by which time Umpire Mike Sweeney had issued fifty separate warnings to the crews , Cambridge were a length ahead and

stretched away to win by three lengths in a record time of 16 minutes 19 seconds , 26 seconds quicker than the previous best time set by Oxford in the 1984 race . Cambridge beat the existing course record by 26 seconds , while Oxford finished 9 seconds behind them .

In the reserve race , Oxford 's Isis beat Cambridge 's Goldie by two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths , their first victory in nine years , and in a time of 17 minutes 2 seconds which equalled the 1996 record . Cambridge won the 50th Women 's Boat Race by one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ quarter lengths in a time of 6 minutes and 25 seconds , their seventh consecutive victory .

= = Reaction = =

Weber remarked " we practised our pushes and made them really effective . " Oxford 's president Lindsay conceded " Cambridge had that extra gear to increase their base for short times . It demolished us . " His stroke , Nick Robinson , commented : " It was going pretty well until the clash , but they came out better than we did . " Umpire Mike Sweeney was unperturbed : " They were both fighting for the same water . That is not a question of disqualification . " Cambridge 's Story said his crew were confident before the race : " We were never in doubt that we would win " and despite the record time , he remarked " We can row a lot better than that . "