

## = The Boat Race 1954 =

The 100th Boat Race took place on 3 April 1954 . 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 former Cambridge rower Kenneth Payne , Oxford won by four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 20 minutes 23 seconds , taking the overall record in the competition to 54 ? 45 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 @-@ 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 ; it is followed throughout the United Kingdom and , as of 2014 , broadcast worldwide . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1953 race by eight lengths , and led overall with 54 victories to Oxford 's 44 ( excluding the " dead heat " of 1877 ) .

Cambridge were coached by N. B. M. Clack ( who had rowed in the 1952 race ) , James Crowden ( who had represented Cambridge in the 1951 and 1952 races ) and R. H. H. Symonds ( who had rowed in the 1931 race ) . Oxford 's coaches were Hugh Edwards ( a Blue in 1926 and 1930 ) , W. J. Llewellyn @-@ Jones , J. H. Page and A. D. Rowe ( who had represented Oxford in the 1948 and 1949 races ) . The race was umpired for the fourth time by the former British Olympian Kenneth Payne , who had rowed for Cambridge in the 1932 and 1934 races .

During the build @-@ up to the race , the rowing correspondent for The Times had suggested that " until three weeks ago a Cambridge victory seemed almost certain " but practice rows had proved disappointing . The Oxford crew had been struck down by influenza in training , and had to reshuffle their order a month before the race . Although the new order " seemed weak " , they made better progress in training than Cambridge , yet the Light Blues , who were described as " well drilled " but with " erratic timekeeping " nevertheless remained " precarious favourites " .

## = = Crews = =

The Cambridge crew weighed an average of 12 st 9 @.@ 5 lb ( 80 @.@ 3 kg ) , 5 pounds ( 2 @.@ 3 kg ) per rower more than their opponents . The Oxford crew saw two members return to the boat , including the cox W. R. Marsh and their boat club president H. M. C. Quick , who was making his third consecutive appearance . Cambridge 's crew contained a single participant with Boat Race experience in their stroke and boat club president J. A. N. Wallis . According to the rowing correspondent for The Times , " perhaps the crews have never been more closely matched " . Oxford 's crew contained four non @-@ British participants , all of them Australian , in E. V. Vine , J. A. Gobbo , J. G. McLeod and Edward Pain .

## = = Race = =

Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Cambridge . In a stiff south @-@ westerly wind , umpire Payne started the race at 12 : 45 p.m. Oxford made a quick start , and according to the rowing correspondent of The Times " literally leaped away , seemingly to row two strokes almost before Cambridge had begun " . By the end of the first minute , the Dark Blues were a few feet ahead but with the bend in the river favouring Cambridge , the crews were level by Craven Steps . Despite a push from Cambridge 's stroke M. J. Marshall , the Light Blues could not gain any advantage and both crews passed the Mile Post level .

Although rating slightly lower than their opposition , Oxford made the best of the bend in the river at Harrods Furniture Depository to lead by about a canvas @-@ length by the time they passed below

Hammersmith Bridge . A strong headwind faced both crews as they rowed into Chiswick Reach and Cambridge struggled in the rough water in the middle of the river . Oxford , whose cox W. R. Marsh had steered towards the shelter of the Surrey shore , gained a length in half a minute , extending out to almost four lengths by Barnes Bridge . Oxford won by four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 20 minutes 23 seconds , for their second victory in eight years .