

= The Boat Race 1955 =

The 101st Boat Race took place on 26 March 1955 . 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 . The race , in which the Cambridge crew was substantially heavier than their opponents and where there were more non @-@ British participants than ever before , was umpired by former Oxford rower Gerald Ellison . Cambridge won by sixteen lengths , the second largest margin of victory in the history of the Boat Race , in a time of 19 minutes 10 seconds . It was their second win in three years and took the overall record in the event to 55 ? 45 in their 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 . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1954 race by four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths , while Cambridge led overall with 54 victories to Oxford 's 45 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) .

Cambridge were coached by J. R. F. Best , G. Bogland @-@ Wood , Thom Langton (who had rowed in the 1937 and 1938 races) , Derek Mays @-@ Smith and James Owen . Oxford 's coaches were Christopher Davidge (who rowed in the 1949 , 1951 and 1952 races and was non @-@ rowing president for the 1951 race) , Hugh Edwards (a Blue in 1926 and 1930) , W. J. Llewellyn @-@ Jones and A. D. Rowe (who had represented Oxford in the 1948 and 1949 races) . The race was umpired by former Oxford rower Gerald Ellison , the Bishop of Willesden , who had rowed for Oxford in the 1932 and 1933 races .

Prior to the race , the rowing correspondent for The Times suggested " it must be rare for two Boat Race crews to be as dissimilar as are the Oxford and Cambridge crews " who were to race against one another . Oxford were the lighter crew yet demonstrated uniformity and excellent watermanship . Cambridge 's style was diverse but demonstrated a " tremendous zest for hard work and hard rowing . "

= = Crews = =

The Cambridge crew weighed an average of 13 st 2 @. @ 5 lb (83 @. @ 5 kg) , 11 pounds (5 @. @ 0 kg) per rower more than their opponents . Six of the Oxford crew had previous Boat Race experience including their bow James A. Gobbo . Cambridge saw two rowers return , in bow D. K. Hill and number four K. A. Masser . The race saw more non @-@ British participants than ever before : Oxford 's crew included four Australians in Gobbo , E. V. Vine , J. G. McLeod and Edward Pain , while Cambridge 's had two Harvard University rowers in P. du Bois and Robert Monks . Oxford 's Pain was an Olympic bronze medallist in the men 's eights at the 1952 Summer Olympics .

= = Race = =

Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Cambridge . The umpire Ellison started the race at 2 : 20 p.m. whereupon Oxford made the better start , rating 40 strokes per minute , and taking a slight lead . Maintaining the higher stroke rate , the Dark Blues passed Craven Steps with a canvas @-@ length lead in a record time . Taking advantage of the bend in the river , Cambridge first drew level before holding a quarter @-@ length lead by the time the crews passed the Mile Post . By Harrods Furniture Depository the lead was just back to a canvas before a mistake in the steering from Oxford 's cox Watson on the approach to

Hammersmith Bridge saw Cambridge leading by a few feet . A spurt from Oxford 's stroke G. Sorrell went unanswered by his crew , and in response , the Light Blue stroke pushed on , taking the Cambridge boat away . By Chiswick Eyot the Light Blues held a three @-@ length lead which they extended to over five lengths by Chiswick Steps .

Rough water in Corney Reach meant both crews had reduced to 28 strokes per minute but Oxford were tiring : their number six McLeod " stopped rowing ... he kept some sort of time , but barely dipping his blade into the water " . The rowing correspondent for The Manchester Guardian suggested that he had " got his oar buried , was pounded in the stomach by its handle and virtually stopped rowing " . Cambridge passed below Barnes Bridge thirty seconds ahead and had reduced their rating to 26 strokes per minute , 6 fewer than Oxford who continued to struggle . Cambridge won by sixteen lengths , the second largest margin of victory in the history of the Boat Race , bettered only by their twenty @-@ length victory in the 1900 race . The winning time was 19 minutes 10 seconds . It was their second win in three years and took the overall record in the event to 55 ? 45 in their favour .