

= The Boat Race 1908 =

The 65th Boat Race took place on 4 April 1908 . 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 were reigning champions , having won the previous year 's race . In a race umpired by Frederick I. Pitman , Cambridge won by two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 19 minutes 20 seconds . It was their third consecutive victory and their sixth win in seven races , taking the overall record in the event to 34 ? 30 in Oxford '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 ") . 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 ; it is followed throughout the United Kingdom and , as of 2015 , broadcast worldwide . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1907 race by four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths , while Oxford led overall with 34 victories to Cambridge 's 29 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) .

Cambridge 's coaches were L. H. K. Bushe @-@ Fox , Francis Escombe (for the fifth consecutive year) , Stanley Muttelbury , five @-@ time Blue between 1886 and 1890 , and David Alexander Wauchope (who had rowed in the 1895 race) . Oxford were coached by Harcourt Gilbey Gold (Dark Blue president for the 1900 race and four @-@ time Blue) and R. P. P. Rowe , who had rowed four times between 1889 and 1892 . For the fifth year the umpire was old Etonian Frederick I. Pitman who rowed for Cambridge in the 1884 , 1885 and 1886 races .

= Crews =

The Cambridge crew weighed an average of 12 st 3 @.@ 25 lb (77 @.@ 5 kg) , 3 @.@ 5 pounds (1 @.@ 6 kg) per rower more than their opponents . Oxford 's crew contained four members with previous Boat Race experience , including Alister Kirby and Albert Gladstone who were rowing in their third race . Six of the Dark Blue crew were educated at Eton College . Cambridge also saw four members return , with Douglas Stuart and Eric Powell making their third appearances in the event . Light Blue number two George Eric Fairbairn was following in his uncle 's footsteps : Steve Fairbairn rowed for Cambridge four times in the 1880s . Oxford 's number three , Australian Collier Cudmore , was the only non @-@ British participant registered in the race .

Former Oxford rower and author George Drinkwater assessed the Cambridge crew as " better and stronger than in the previous year " . Conversely , " misfortune dogged the [Oxford] crew " : firstly their number five of 1907 , James Angus Gillan was available but forbidden to row by his doctors . Influenza then swept through the crew , before Kirby was struck down by jaundice ; despite not fully recovering , he took part in the race .

= Race =

Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Cambridge . In a strong head @-@ wind , umpire Pitman started the race at 3 : 30 p.m. The Light Blues made the better start , and slightly out @-@ rating Oxford , began to pull away . Rough water favoured Cambridge 's style of rowing , and they were clear of Oxford by the time they passed the Mile Post . The crews passed Harrods Furniture Depository with the Light Blues two lengths ahead and although the Dark Blues spurted again and again , they failed to make any inroads in the Cambridge lead , who began to pull away once again after passing under Barnes Bridge . They passed the finishing post leading by two and a half lengths in a time of 19 minutes 20 seconds . It was Cambridge 's third consecutive victory , and their sixth in seven years , and took the overall

record to 34 ? 30 in Oxford 's favour . The winning time was the fastest since the 1902 race and it was the narrowest margin of victory since the 1901 race . Drinkwater described the race as " a much finer struggle than those of the two previous years " .