

= The Boat Race 2006 =

The 152nd Boat Race took place on 2 April 2006 . 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 . Oxford , whose crew contained the first French rower in the history of the event , won the race by five lengths which was umpired by former Oxford rower Simon Harris .

In the reserve race Goldie beat Isis and Oxford 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 . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 2005 race by two lengths , while Cambridge led overall with 78 victories to Oxford 's 72 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) . The race was sponsored by Xchanging for the second consecutive year , and was umpired by former Oxford Blue Simon Harris .

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 .

= = Crews = =

The Oxford crew , whose average age was 24 , comprised four Britons , two Canadians , two Americans and , in Bastien Ripoll , the first French rower to participate in the contest . Cambridge 's crew , with an average age of 26 , consisted of three Britons , three Germans , an Australian , an American and a Canadian .

= = Race = =

Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station where they were afforded some shelter from the inclement conditions with strong winds creating choppy water . Under cloudy skies , Oxford took an early lead but Cambridge came back into contention and held a half @-@ a @-@ length lead at Harrods . As they crews passed under Hammersmith Bridge , " wind and waves engulfed the boats and both seemed to check " . Oxford drew level and their cox Seb Pearce called for a push ; his crew responded , moving away from Cambridge in the rough water . Extending their lead out to two lengths by the Bandstand , Oxford pulled further away winning by five lengths in a time of 18 minutes and 26 seconds .

In the reserve race , Cambridge 's Goldie beat Oxford 's Isis . Earlier , Oxford won the 61st Women 's Boat Race by half @-@ a @-@ length in a time of 5 minutes 54 seconds .

= = Reaction = =

Cambridge coach Duncan Holland suggested " it 's pretty hard to row with a boat full of water " while his cox Rudge claimed " Oxford were a little bit sheltered and it made a big difference " . His counterpart , Oxford cox Pearce , was jubilant : " It was awesome . I didn 't expect it work out that way but it was great . All along we were the better crew . The bookies just got it wrong . " Cambridge Boat Club president Edwards said " They handled the conditions better than us and that was it ... There was no more we could have done . " Oxford 's president Barney Williams said " We were

pushed really hard " while his French crew @-@ mate Ripoll claimed " the key moment was along the island , in a washing machine " .