

= The Boat Race 1866 =

The 23rd Boat Race took place on the River Thames on 24 March 1866 . The Boat Race is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge . Oxford won by three lengths in a time of 25 minutes and 35 seconds , one of the slowest times in the history of the event .

= = 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 . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having defeated Cambridge by four lengths in the previous year 's race . Oxford led overall with twelve wins to Cambridge 's ten .

In late 1865 , the Cambridge University Boat Club president Robert Kinglake wrote to Oxford in order to draw up rules on the seniority of participants in the Boat Race , asserting that Cambridge could not agree to send out a challenge unless this agreement was made . The proposal included the suggestion that " no pass or ???? man may row after one year has elapsed from the date of him having passed his final examination . That no honour man may row after the end of his fourth year from the date of his commencing residence . " While both universities were agreed with regard to the exlcusion of those reading " ordinary " degrees (also referred to as " pass " degrees , as opposed to honours degrees) , Oxford rejected the second clause which would have potentially excluded a small number of rowers given the differences in timetables between the universities .

Despite the disagreement , Kinglake sent the traditional challenge to Oxford who accepted . Cambridge went to Putney ten days before the race which was scheduled for 24 March , while Oxford practised there for eight days . The Light Blues rowed against a London Rowing Club eight in the buildup while the Dark Blues took on a watermen eight and a Kingston eight during their preparations . The race was umpired by Joseph William Chitty who had rowed for Oxford twice in 1849 (in the March and December races) and the 1852 race , while the starter was Edward Searle .

= = Crews = =

The two crews were nearly identical in weight : the average of the Cambridge crew was 11 st 12 @.@ 875 lb (75 @.@ 5 kg) , 0 @.@ 125 pounds (0 @.@ 1 kg) per rower more than Oxford . Each crew saw the return of five former Blues , including the Light Blue number six Robert Kinglake who was rowing in his fourth Boat Race ; Dark Blues Robert Taunton Raikes , Brown and Charles Tottenham were making their third Boat Race appearance .

= = Race = =

Oxford won the toss for the fifth consecutive year and elected to start on the Middlesex side of the river , handing the Surrey station to Cambridge , despite the advantage being " nullified ... for there was a strong wind blowing from the south @-@ west . " According to The Field , " arrangements had been made by the Thames Conservancy Board , which had most effectually put a stopper " on disruption from paddle boats to allow an uninterrupted start at 7.48am. Oxford led from the start but Cambridge redressed the balance and were half a length ahead by the time the crews shot Hammersmith Bridge . They maintained their lead to Chiswick Eyot and despite rough water , Cambridge continued in front . Avoiding a barge at Corny Reach , the Light Blues allowed their opponents to pass and take a half @-@ length lead which Oxford took to Barnes Bridge . Even though Cambridge made a push , even drawing level , Oxford pulled away and won by three lengths in a time of 25 minutes and 35 seconds . It was the third @-@ slowest time in the history of the

event on the Championship Course .