

= The Boat Race 1974 =

The 120th Boat Race took place on 6 April 1974 . 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 . It was won by Oxford who passed the finishing post five @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths ahead of Cambridge , in a winning time of 17 minutes 35 seconds , the fastest in the history of the race , beating the existing record set in the 1948 race . It was umpired by Ran Laurie .

In the reserve race , Goldie beat Isis , and in the Women 's Boat Race , Cambridge were victorious .

= = 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 . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having beaten Oxford by a thirteen lengths in the previous year 's race . Cambridge held the overall lead , with 67 victories to Oxford 's 51 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) .

The first Women 's Boat Race took place in 1927 , but did not become an annual fixture until the 1960s . Up 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 .

During preparation for the race , both crews were defeated on the Thames by the Lubrication Laboratory boat from Imperial College London . Jim Railton , writing in The Times was not impressed : " It has already been well established that there are no top class crews in this ... Boat Race . Each day on the Tideway in the final days of training have simply produced more negatives " . Cambridge also lost twice in short races against their reserve crew Goldie , whom Oxford had defeated at the Reading University Head of the River Race by eight seconds . In appalling conditions , Cambridge won an interrupted race against a Barclays Bank crew . Meanwhile , Oxford defeated a " motley eight " from Tideway Scullers School by four lengths along the full course . Oxford 's finishing coach was Daniel Topolski while Cambridge were guided by British Olympic rower David Jennens , and the race was umpired by Ran Laurie , who had rowed for Cambridge in the 1934 , 1935 and 1936 races .

= = Crews = =

The Cambridge crew was marginally heavier than their opponents , weighing an average of 13 st 5 @.@ 25 lb (84 @.@ 7 kg) , 0 @.@ 25 pounds (0 @.@ 1 kg) per rower more than Oxford . Oxford saw four Blues return to their crew , Nick Tee , Sam Nevin , Dennis Payne and American Olympian David Sawyier , while Cambridge welcomed back two ? Ben Duncan and Howard Jacobs .

= = Race = =

Cambridge won the toss and elected to start from the Middlesex station . Oxford took an early lead with their stroke Sawyier making a good start . Despite this , by the Mile Post , Oxford were just one @-@ third of a length clear , and while Cambridge 's stroke rate was lower than their Dark Blue opposition , they remained in contention . By Hammersmith Bridge , Oxford held a two @-@ length lead , and despite favourable wind and ride , Cambridge failed to respond . At Chiswick Steps , the lead had extended to four lengths and by Barnes Bridge it was five . Oxford passed the finishing post in a record @-@ breaking time of 17 minutes 35 seconds , breaking the existing record from

the 1948 race , five @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths clear of the Light Blues . Railton commented : " Tideway records reflect conditions more than comparisons with previous Boat Race crews " but noted " considering the slow conditions ... Oxford 's performance must have been particularly inspired . " The winning time was two seconds faster than the best time over the course , set by Oxford in practice in 1965 , and 15 seconds quicker than the race record , set in the 1948 race by Cambridge .

In the reserve race , Cambridge 's Goldie beat Oxford 's Isis by five lengths , their seventh consecutive victory . In the 28th running of the Women 's Boat Race , Cambridge triumphed , their eleventh consecutive victory .