

= The Boat Race 1951 =

The 97th Boat Race took place on 24 and 26 March 1951 . 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 . After Oxford sank in the first race held on 24 March , a re @-@ row was ordered by the umpire and took place two days later . It was the first time one of the crews had sunk during the race since the 1925 race . In a race umpired by former Oxford rower Gerald Ellison , Cambridge won the re @-@ row by twelve lengths in a time of 20 minutes 50 seconds , taking the overall record in the event to 53 ? 43 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 . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1950 race by a three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths , with Cambridge leading overall with 52 victories to Oxford 's 43 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) .

Cambridge were coached by W. T. Arthur (who rowed for the Light Blues in the 1950 race) , Roy Meldrum (a coach for Lady Margaret Boat Club) , James Owen and H. R. N. Rickett (who rowed three times between 1930 and 1932) . Oxford 's coaches were T. A. Brocklebank (who had rowed for Cambridge three times between 1929 and 1931 and who had also coached the Light Blues in the 1934 race) , J. L. Garton (who had rowed for the Dark Blues in the 1938 and 1939 races) and J. A. MacNabb (who rowed for Cambridge in the 1924 race) . The race was umpired for the first time by former Oxford rower and Bishop of Willesden Gerald Ellison who had competed in the 1932 and 1933 races .

The Light Blues were considered to be firm favourites , yet the rowing correspondent for The Times suggested that " the outcome is anything but certain " . The rowing correspondent writing in The Manchester Guardian stated that " if Oxford to @-@ day can make the most of their superiority in weight and good fighting spirit the race is by no means lost to them " .

= = Crews = =

The Oxford crew weighed an average of 13 st 0 @.@ 5 lb (82 @.@ 6 kg) , 9 pounds (4 @.@ 1 kg) per rower more than their opponents . Cambridge saw four rowers return with Boat Race experience , including their number six Charles Lloyd and stroke David Jennens . Oxford 's crew contained three rowers who had taken part in the previous year 's race . Five of Cambridge rowers were studying at St John 's College , thus rowed for Lady Margaret Boat Club under the supervision of Meldrum . Three participants in the race were registered as non @-@ British . Oxford 's number two A. J. Smith was Australian while their cox G. Carver was American ; Cambridge 's Lloyd was also Australian .

= = Race = =

Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Cambridge . Umpire Ellison started the race at 1 : 45 p.m , with a strong wind blowing against the tide , creating " sizeable waves " . Oxford had already taken onboard a considerable amount of water from their row to the stakeboats and had opted for less physical protection against the inclement conditions than their opponents . Both crews started at a relatively low stroke rate to cater for the conditions , with Cambridge moderately out @-@ rating their opponents . The Light Blues took an early lead and appeared to be coping with the conditions better than Oxford , and

were over a length ahead by the time they passed the London Rowing Club boathouse . The Dark Blues shipped more water until they became entirely submerged , and were rescued by spectators on the Oxford launch Niceia . Cambridge continued , and headed for the relative protection of the Surrey shore but were caught by the umpire 's boat and informed that the race was void .

It was the first sinking in the Boat Race since the 1925 race in which Oxford went down . Since the umpire declared a " no row " and because the reason for the sinking was deemed to be " equipment failure before the end of the Fulham Wall " , it was agreed between the umpire , the boat club presidents and the Port of London Authority that a re @-@ row be arranged which would take place on Easter Monday , 26 March 1951 .

After the two @-@ day delay , Oxford once again won the toss and once again elected to start from the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Cambridge . Ellison started the re @-@ row at 2 : 30 p.m , in light rain and a " dead smooth " river . Cambridge made the better start and although Oxford quickly drew level , the Light Blues were clear by the end of Fulham Wall . Poor steering from cox Carver allowed Cambridge to pull further ahead , passing the Mile Post more than two lengths clear , and Harrods Furniture Depository three lengths up . Jennens pushed on and by the time Cambridge passed below Hammersmith Bridge , they were four and a half lengths clear and seven ahead by Chiswick Steps . By Barnes Bridge , the lead was 11 lengths .

Cambridge won by a margin of 12 lengths in a time of 20 minutes 50 seconds , securing their fifth consecutive victory . It was the largest winning margin since the 1900 race and the slowest winning time since the 1947 race . Crowden later noted that while he believed the initially sinking to be more down to " inferior oarsmanship rather than an accident " , he was certain that his crew would have failed to finish the course had they been allowed to continue . The rowing correspondent of The Manchester Guardian suggested that " the 1951 race , with anti @-@ climax following disaster , is best forgotten as quickly as may be . " The victory took the overall record in the event to 53 ? 43 in Cambridge 's favour .