

= The Boat Race 1983 =

The 129th Boat Race took place on 2 April 1983 . Held annually , the event is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge along the River Thames . The pre @-@ race preparation saw Cambridge threaten to boycott the race for the first time , following the inclusion of Boris Rankov in the Oxford boat . The crews were the two heaviest in the history of the event , and featured ten former Boat Race competitors . Oxford won the race by four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths .

Isis won the reserve race , while Cambridge were victorious in 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 miles (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 were the reigning champions , having beaten Cambridge by three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ quarter lengths in the previous year 's race . However , Cambridge held the overall lead , with 68 victories to Oxford 's 59 . The race was sponsored by Ladbrokes ; the winner was awarded the Ladbrokes Trophy .

On 7 March 1983 , Cambridge issued a statement suggesting that they might boycott the race following a dispute over Oxford 's selection of Boris Rankov as a member of their crew . Veteran of the previous five Boat Races , all of which were Dark Blue victories , Cambridge argued Rankov was ineligible for inclusion as he was a lecturer at the university . Coach David Townsend of the University of London offered the services of his crew to provide an opponent for Oxford , should Cambridge refuse to participate . Rankov himself had offered to withdraw from the race , but the Dark Blues ' committee rejected this . Cambridge finally agreed to race after they reached an agreement with Oxford to discuss and possibly tighten the eligibility criteria . This ultimately led to establishment of the so @-@ called " Rankov Rule " , which states that oarsmen will compete in the race no more than four times as an undergraduate and no more than four times as a graduate .

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 .

= = Crews = =

The two crews were the heaviest in Boat Race history , Oxford averaging 14 stone 8 lbs (92 @.@ 3 kg) per rower , nearly 7 pounds (3 @.@ 2 kg) a man heavier than the Cambridge crew , and were pre @-@ race favourites to win an eighth consecutive race . Cambridge 's crew featured six unsuccessful Blues , while Oxford 's boat contained four Blues with ten Boat Race victories between them . While seven of the Oxford rowers were international post @-@ graduates , Cambridge 's crew included seven undergraduates . The average age of the Oxford crew was 25 , four years more than Cambridge .

= = Race = =

Cambridge won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station . Oxford , rowing at a higher rate , took an early lead and were clear of Cambridge by the Mile Post . Extending their lead to six seconds by Hammersmith Bridge , Oxford pushed on to lead by nine seconds at Chiswick Steps . Despite trying to keep in touch , Cambridge were four lengths behind at Barnes Bridge and trailed

by 13 seconds as Oxford passed the finishing post . Oxford won by four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 19 minutes 7 seconds .

This was Oxford 's eighth consecutive victory , and their ninth in ten years , and took the overall record to 68 ? 60 in favour of Cambridge . The race was watched by 14 million television viewers .

In the reserve race , Oxford 's Isis beat Cambridge 's Goldie by six @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths , while Cambridge won the 38th Women 's Boat Race .