

= The Boat Race 1988 =

The 134th Boat Race took place on 2 April 1988 . Held annually , the event is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge along the River Thames . Oxford won by five @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 18 minutes 27 seconds , the equal @-@ fourth fastest time in the event 's history . The race was umpired by former Cambridge rowing Blue Mike Sweeney .

In the reserve race , Cambridge 's Goldie won , while 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 1987 race by four lengths , with Cambridge leading overall with 69 victories to Oxford 's 64 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) . The event was sponsored by Beefeater Gin and was televised in the United Kingdom by the BBC on its Grandstand sports programme .

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 = =

Oxford weighed in with the heaviest crew in Boat Race history ? on average the rowers weighed 14 st 11 @. @ 5 lb (93 @. @ 9 kg) , 11 lb more per man than Cambridge . Oxford 's Gavin Stewart , at 6 ft 8 @. @ 5 in (2 @. @ 04 m) was the tallest rower in the history of the Boat Race . Cambridge 's crew included four former Blues while Oxford 's featured six . Oxford 's coaching team included Canadian international coach Mike Spracklen .

= = Race = =

The race took place on 2 April 1988 . Oxford started as pre @-@ race favourites , and having won the toss , elected to start from the Surrey station . Immediately from the start , the umpire was called into action , warning both coxes for steering too closely to one another . Cambridge took a slight lead but Oxford soon recovered to become level , and by the Mile Post were three seconds ahead . Shortly after , the Cambridge number 7 , Nick Grundy caught a crab , causing his boat to " shudder to a halt . " Oxford slowly extended their lead ; nine seconds ahead at Hammersmith Bridge , eleven seconds by the Chiswick Steps and fifteen by Barnes Bridge . Oxford passed the finishing post 16 seconds ahead of Cambridge , winning by five @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 18 minutes 27 seconds , the equal @-@ fourth fastest time in the event 's history .

In the reserve race , Cambridge 's Goldie won by five @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 17 minutes and 55 seconds , their second consecutive victory . Oxford won the 43rd Women 's Boat Race with their third victory in four years .

= = Reaction = =

The Beefeater Gin Trophy was presented by Denis Thatcher . Grundy said of his crab : " I feathered my oar after a stroke and the tip caught the water , which plunged it back in . " Oxford Boat Club

president Chris Penny said " It was not an easy race but it was enjoyable . We kept our heads , found our rhythm and moved back and through them . "