

## = The Boat Race 1979 =

The 125th Boat Race took place on 17 March 1979 . 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 150th anniversary race was won by Oxford by three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ lengths . For the first time in 50 years , neither crew featured foreign rowers , while Cambridge 's stroke was replaced just hours before the race . Goldie won the reserve race in the slowest time in the history of the race while Cambridge 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 " ) . 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 . The rivalry is a major point of honour between the two universities , as of 2014 it is followed throughout the United Kingdom and broadcast worldwide . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1978 race after Cambridge sank . Cambridge , however , led overall with 68 victories to Oxford 's 55 . The race was sponsored for the third consecutive year by Ladbrokes . Former Oxford Blue Ronnie Howard was the umpire for the race . To allow for television viewing , the start time of the race ( 2 p.m. ) was an hour earlier than the traditional flood tide .

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 .

Oxford were being coached for the sixth consecutive time by Daniel Topolski who had himself rowed in the 1967 and 1968 races . As coach , Topolski had suffered just one defeat . Cambridge 's head coach was Czechoslovakian former international rower Bohumil Janoušek ; although a double Olympic medallist , he was still cautious of the event : " It 's a peculiar race . The distance , the bends , the fact that only two crews race , the fact that during the course you encounter all sorts of water and wind conditions . " Janoušek had been employed in order to prevent Cambridge losing for the fourth consecutive time , an occurrence which last took place following the 1912 race . Preparations for the race were hampered by appalling weather conditions : horizontal sleet and snow made practice rows challenging .

## = = Crews = =

Both crews weighed an average of 13 st 4 lb ( 84 @.@ 2 kg ) ; Henderson , the Cambridge cox weighed 13 pounds ( 5 @.@ 9 kg ) more than his Dark Blue counterpart . In the week leading up to the race however , Cambridge 's Andy Grey was struck down by gastroenteritis . While he recovered , his roommate John Woodhouse became ill and withdrew from the race three hours prior to the event . Woodhouse was replaced by Graham Phillips ( who weighed 8 pounds ( 4 kg ) less than Woodhouse ) and the Light Blue boat was reorganised , with Phillips rowing at three and Nick Davies moving to stroke . Oxford 's crew contained four returning Blues , with Boris Rankov making the second of what would become six appearances in the race . Cambridge welcomed back four Blue rowers and the cox Henderson , all of whom had rowed the previous year .

## = = Race = =

Oxford won the toss ( for the fifth consecutive year ) and elected to start from the Surrey station . Conditions were calm ? Desmond Hill writing in The Daily Telegraph described the river as " glassy " ? and the tide , as a result of the earlier start time , was very weak . The two boats were at 45

degrees to one another as the umpire dropped the flag to signal the start and within a minute , Oxford were clear of Cambridge . Oxford held a lead of two lengths by Craven Cottage and passed the Mile Post five seconds ahead , and extended their lead to eight seconds by the time the crews shot Hammersmith Bridge . Davies brought two two pushes out of the Light Blues at Chiswick Eyot but Oxford maintained their lead and passed the finishing post in 20 minutes 33 seconds , three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths ahead of Cambridge . It was Oxford 's fourth consecutive victory and their fifth in six years .

Taking place 30 minutes before the main race , the reserve race saw Cambridge 's Goldie defeat Oxford 's Isis by twelve lengths and thirty seconds . As of 2014 , the winning time of 22 minutes 50 seconds is the slowest time in the history of the event . It was Goldie 's third consecutive victory , and their eleventh in thirteen years . Cambridge won the 34th Women 's Boat Race , making it their third in a row , and their sixteenth victory in seventeen years .

= = Reaction = =

Oxford cox , Peter Berners @-@ Lee suggested : " I got some help from the tide at the beginning , but very little later . I was expecting a neck @-@ and @-@ neck race and I couldn 't believe we were a length up at Fulham . "