

= The Boat Race 1849 (December) =

The 10th Boat Race took place on the River Thames on 15 December 1849 . Typically held annually , the event is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge . The race was won by Oxford who triumphed over Cambridge after they were disqualified . It is the only time the Boat Race has been held twice in a calendar year , and as of 2015 remains the only time the event has been decided as a result of a disqualification .

= = 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 .

Cambridge had beaten Oxford " easily " in the race earlier that year . It was as a result of the manner of the defeat , and with doubts over the construction of the Oxford boat that they issued a challenge to Cambridge University Boat Club in October to race again in December . The invitation to race was " immediately accepted . " Cambridge held the overall lead , with seven victories to Oxford 's two .

= = Crews = =

Oxford 's crew contained four rowers who had featured in the previous race in March , with Chitty , Steward , Sykes and Rich returning for the Dark Blues . Cambridge welcomed back five rowers and the cox , George Booth . The difference in weight between the crews was marginal , Oxford 's rowers weighing an average of just under 11 st 6 lb (72 @.@ 4 kg) were 0 @.@ 125 pounds (0 @.@ 06 kg) per man heavier than Cambridge .

= = Race = =

Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Middlesex station , leaving Cambridge with Surrey . Weather conditions were poor : rain and a strong wind provided a " pitiless pelting " to spectators and the crews alike . Although pre @-@ race betting indicated no clear favourite , the high winds were thought to provide Cambridge with a slight advantage " as their style of rowing was deemed to be more suitable to stormy weather " and so the Light Blues went into the race as marginal favourites .

Both crews were on the river before 3pm in boats constructed by Searle and Sons , described as " masterpieces of art " , complete with splashboards to reduce the amount of water taken on board . Cambridge made the better start and were clear by the Searles boathouse . They increased the lead by a further half @-@ a @-@ length and held it for another 0 @.@ 5 miles (0 @.@ 8 km) , at which point Oxford produced a " marked improvement in speed " and began to reduce the deficit . As Cambridge had already moved in front of Oxford , they steered back towards the Surrey shore in preparation for shooting Hammersmith Bridge . In doing so , a collision ensued , causing Oxford to come to halt . Although Cambridge made a three @-@ to @-@ four length headstart , Oxford 's subsequent pace combined with Cambridge 's wayward steering reduced the gap and by the end of the race , the boats were nearly level .

Immediately upon the conclusion , the race umpire , Thomas Howard Fellows of Leander Club declared the result in favour of Oxford , disqualifying Cambridge for the foul . Cambridge , although believing the foul was against them , did not object to the decision . The Cambridge University Boat Club secretary Charles Bagot wrote : " It is much to be regretted that a foul should have taken place , as , besides rendering the race an imperfect test of the merits of the respective crews , it very much disturbed the harmony and good feeling which should exist between members of the rival

Universities in such contests . " As of 2015 , it remains the only time that the Boat Race has been decided by a disqualification .