

## = The Boat Race 1883 =

The 40th Boat Race , an annual side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge along the River Thames , took place on 15 March 1883 . Following confusion at the start of the race and a snow storm during the event , Oxford won by a margin of three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 21 minutes 18 seconds .

## = = 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 . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions having won the previous year 's race by seven lengths , and held the overall lead , with 21 victories to Cambridge 's 17 ( excluding the " dead heat " of 1877 ) .

Cambridge 's coaches were John Goldie ( who had rowed for Cambridge four times in the 1869 , 1870 , 1871 and 1872 races ) and Herbert Edward Rhodes ( who was also a four @-@ time Blue , rowing in each race between 1873 and 1876 ) . Oxford were coached by William Grenfell ( who rowed for Oxford in the 1877 and 1878 races ) and Walter Bradford Woodgate ( who represented Oxford in the 1862 and 1863 races ) . Woodgate also briefly coached the Light Blues the same year . The umpire for the race was Robert Lewis @-@ Lloyd ( who had rowed for Cambridge four times between 1856 and 1859 ) and the starter was Edward Searle , who had fulfilled that position since the 1840 race .

Oxford chose to discard their old boat which they had used since the 1878 race in favour of one built by Harry Clasper . The Cambridge crew was subject to several late changes to the stroke seat ; three times in quick succession the occupant was replaced as a result of illness and tactical decisions .

## = = Crews = =

The Cambridge crew weighed an average of 12 st 2 @.@ 75 lb ( 77 @.@ 3 kg ) , 4 @.@ 75 pounds ( 2 @.@ 2 kg ) more than their opponents . Oxford 's crew contained six former Blues , including A. R. Paterson , L. R. West and cox E. H. Lyon , all of whom were making their third appearance in the event . Cambridge saw five participants return , including the Cambridge University Boat Club president Charles William Moore and Peter Wilson Atkin who were rowing in their third Boat Race . The race featured two non @-@ British participants : Cambridge 's Steve Fairbairn ( whose brother Charles had competed in the 1879 race ) was born in Victoria in Australia , while Oxford 's George Quinlan Roberts hailed from Tasmania .

## = = Race = =

Cambridge were pre @-@ race favourites although former Oxford rower and author George Drinkwater noted that the public had been unaware of the significant improvements from Oxford following their transition to the Clasper vessel . Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Cambridge . The race started at 5 : 39 p.m. and quickly descended into chaos : darkness was falling and it became quickly apparent that the Cambridge crew had not heard the command to " go " from the starter Searle . By now , according to Oxford 's bow G. C. Bourne , he was " old with a feeble voice " , and although the Oxford stroke L. R. West saw Searle drop his handkerchief , and set off , the Cambridge boat did not move .

West seized the initiative and took the Dark Blue crew off to an immediate lead which , despite a " blinding snowstorm " , they extended to three lengths by Hammersmith Bridge . They went on to win

by three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 21 minutes 18 seconds . It was Oxford 's fourth consecutive victory and took the overall record to 22 ? 17 in their favour .