

= The Boat Race 1963 =

The 109th Boat Race took place on 23 March 1963 . 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 race , umpired by Gerald Ellison , the Bishop of Chester , was won by Oxford with a winning margin of five lengths .

= = 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 , followed throughout the United Kingdom and broadcast worldwide . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having won the previous year 's race by five lengths , and led overall in the event with 60 victories to Oxford 's 47 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) .

Cambridge 's coaches were Harry Almond (who rowed for Cambridge in the 1950 and 1951 races) , Tony Butcher (who rowed in the 1947 race for Cambridge) , David Jennens (who rowed three times between 1949 and 1951) and Charles Lloyd (who also rowed three times from 1949 to 1951) . Oxford were coached by R. M. A. Bourne (who represented Oxford in the 1946 and 1947 races) , Ronnie Howard (who rowed twice , in the 1957 and 1959 races) , Mike Nicholson (the non @-@ rowing boat club president of Cambridge in 1947) , Antony Rowe (who had rowed in the 1948 and 1949 races) and E. R. Spencer . During practice rows at Putney , Cambridge experienced a number of " crabs " and while the crew demonstrated a " nervous disability to cope with rough water " , they had the quicker start .

The race was umpired by Gerald Ellison , Bishop of Chester , who had rowed for Oxford in the 1932 and 1933 races .

= = Crews = =

The Oxford crew weighed an average of 13 st 0 @.@ 125 lb (82 @.@ 4 kg) , over 5 @.@ 5 pounds (2 @.@ 5 kg) per rower more than their opponents . Cambridge 's crew contained just a single rower with Boat Race experience in the boat club president and stroke Lord Chewton , while Oxford saw Richard Morton , David Skailes and cox Christopher Strong return . Four rowers , two from each university , were registered as overseas participants in the race : Oxford 's Philip Roff was Australian while D. Spencer was American , and Cambridge 's B. Jackson was South African while John Haasland hailed from New Zealand . Oxford 's boat club president Toby Tennant had removed himself from the crew two weeks prior to the race as a result of a lack of form .

A correspondent for The Times noted that although there " has never been the slightest possibility " that the Cambridge crew would be of " really first rate " , the hard work had produced a " presentable University crew " . Meanwhile , although Oxford had " no stars " and had arrived at Putney as an " unusually backward crew " , progress during practice made for definite improvement .

= = Race = =

Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Cambridge . The race commenced at 11.30am in a " fresh north @-@ north @-@ westerly wind " . As had been anticipated , Cambridge took an early lead and were three @-@ quarters of a length ahead after the first minute of the race . Continuing at a higher stroke rate than Oxford in the second minute , the Light Blues were almost clear by the end of the Fulham Wall . Still nearly a length behind by the Mile Post , Oxford cox Strong began to steer towards Cambridge , forcing them towards the centre of the river , narrowly avoiding a warning from the umpire .

Level by Harrods Furniture Depository , Oxford were half a length up by Hammersmith Bridge , increasing to over a length by The Doves pub , despite an " almost despairing spurt " from Cambridge . The lead was three and a half lengths by Chiswick Steps and four and a half by Barnes Bridge . Oxford won by five lengths in a time of 20 minutes 47 seconds , the slowest time since the 1951 race . It was the Dark Blues ' first victory in three years and took the overall record to 60 ? 48 in Cambridge 's favour .