

= The Boat Race 2014 =

The 160th Boat Race took place on 6 April 2014 . Following a clash of oars which broke one of the Cambridge 's crew 's riggers , Oxford won the race by 11 lengths , the largest margin of victory since 1973 .

In the reserve race Oxford 's Isis beat Cambridge 's Goldie , while Oxford won the Women 's Boat Race .

= = Background = =

The Boat Race is an annual rowing eight competition between the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge . First held in 1829 , the competition is a 4 @. @ 2 @- @ mile (6 @. @ 8 km) race along The 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 worldwide . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having beaten Cambridge by one @- @ and @- @ a @- @ half lengths in the previous year 's race . However Cambridge held the overall lead , with 81 victories to Oxford 's 77 .

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 = =

The Cambridge crew (known as the " Light Blues ") had a 5 @- @ kilogram (11 lb) per person advantage , but Oxford (the " Dark Blues ") were the pre @- @ race favourites . The Cambridge crew was 24 years old on average , while Oxford averaged 26 years . The Oxford crew featured three British rowers , two Canadians , two New Zealanders , an American , and one member with dual Canadian @- @ American citizenship . The Cambridge crew consisted of three British rowers , four Americans , an Australian , and a German . Three of the Oxford rowers had competed in the Olympics .

= = Race description = =

At race time , conditions were mild with an overcast sky . A crowd of 250 @, @ 000 people were in attendance . It was sponsored by BNY Mellon and thus officially titled " The BNY Mellon Boat Race " . Oxford won the coin toss and elected to start from the southern bank of the Thames . In the first five minutes of the race , the lead changed hands three times . First Oxford , then Cambridge drifted towards the centre of the river and were warned by the umpire . Oxford turned away , but before Cambridge had time to do so , the two boats bumped . The clash caused a rowing error by Cambridge 's Luke Juckett , as he was bucked from his seat and nearly thrown overboard . He did not recover until five strokes later . Oxford took advantage , rowing out to a significant lead with two @- @ thirds of the course to go , and steadily increased the gap . Cambridge were unable to respond and in the end Oxford won by 11 lengths , the largest margin of victory since 1973 .

Oxford finished with a time of 18 minutes , 36 seconds ; this was 32 seconds faster than Cambridge . It was their fifth victory in the last seven years , and tenth in the last fifteen . Stroke Constantine Louloudis was a member of a victorious Oxford crew for the third time (2011 , 2013 and 2014 ? he competed in the Olympics instead in 2012) . Cambridge now lead the overall series 81 ? 78 . At the finish , the Oxford crew threw their cox , Laurence Harvey , into the water in celebration . After the race , Cambridge appealed the result but umpire Richard Phelps ruled that the bump occurred on neutral water and that neither crew should be penalised . Oxford 's Sam O ? Connor called it " very minor , one of the smallest clashes I ? ve ever had " . Juckett said the clash broke his rigger and

made it " really hard to keep rowing " , but added that " clashing is part of the race . "

In the reserve race , Oxford 's Isis beat Cambridge 's Goldie . Earlier , Oxford also won the women 's race .

= = Reaction = =

O 'Connor said he was confident Oxford would have won even without the clash . Oxford Boat Club president Malcolm Howard remarked " You cannot help but feel for the two @-@ seat of Cambridge , it ? s tough . " Cambridge Boat Club president Steve Dudek called it " a frustrating way to lose ... I would never wish that on anyone . " BBC commentator Tom James remarked it was " great for British rowing " that Louloudis won the race for the third time .

An estimated 130 million people worldwide watched the event on television .