

## = The Boat Race 1864 =

The 21st 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 14 March 1864 . Umpired by Joseph William Chitty , Oxford won by nine lengths in a time of 21 minutes 4 seconds , the fastest winning time since the event was held on The Championship Course in 1845 . The race , whose start was moved in order to avoid interruptions from river traffic , was witnessed by the Prince of Wales .

## = = 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 and followed throughout the United Kingdom and worldwide . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1863 race by ten lengths , with the overall record tied on ten victories each .

The location of the start of the race was moved to approximately 400 feet ( 122 m ) upstream of Putney Bridge in order to reduce interruptions to the race from steamers . Indeed , both boat club presidents had issued a caution to the steamer captains , indicating that the race would be conducted on the ebb tide should any interruption take place which would risk the steamers becoming grounded at Mortlake . The finish was moved the corresponding distance upstream to maintain the traditional length of the race . Oxford rowed in the same boat as the previous race , which was constructed by J. and S. Salter while Cambridge utilised a new vessel built for them by Taylor of Newcastle . Oxford were coached by George Morrison who had rowed in the 1859 , 1860 and 1861 races and was non @-@ rowing president for the 1862 race . The race was umpired by Joseph William Chitty who had rowed for Oxford twice in 1849 ( in the March and December races ) and the 1852 race , while the starter was Edward Searle .

## = = Crews = =

The Cambridge crew weighed an average of 11 st 11 @.@ 5 lb ( 74 @.@ 9 kg ) , 4 pounds ( 1 @.@ 8 kg ) per rower more than their Dark Blue opposition . Cambridge 's crew , however , was tall , averaging over 6 ft 0 in ( 1 @.@ 83 m ) per rower . Oxford 's crew contained three rowers from the previous years race in William Awdry , F. H. Kelly and W. B. R. Jacobson . The Cambridge boat also saw three participants from the 1863 race : bow John Hawkshaw , number five Robert Kinglake and cox Francis Archer ( who had also coxed the Light Blues in the 1862 race ) returned .

## = = Race = =

The weather on the day of the race was sunny with a mild breeze . The Prince of Wales , future King of the United Kingdom Edward VII was in attendance ; as a result , the start time was moved forward to enable the Prince to leave for another engagement . Oxford were pre @-@ race favourites , and won the toss , electing to start from the Middlesex station , handing the Surrey side of the river to Cambridge . The Cantabrigians made the better start , and soon led by a third of a length . However , by Finch 's field , Oxford had recovered to draw level and started to leave the Light Blues behind . Half a mile into the course , the Dark Blues held a half @-@ length lead which they extended to a length by Craven Cottage .

With a clear water advantage , they crossed in front of Cambridge and were three lengths ahead by the Crab Tree pub , extending to " four or five lengths " by Hammersmith Bridge . They were so far ahead at Barnes Bridge their advantage in lengths was impossible " to be accurately counted " . Misinterpreting the position of the finish line , the Oxford crew stopped rowing early , but once aware

of their mistake , rowed on to the finish , winning by nine lengths in a time of 21 minutes 4 seconds . It was their fourth consecutive victory and was , at the time , the fastest winning time in the history of the event .