

= The Boat Race 1989 =

The 135th Boat Race took place on 25 March 1989 . Held annually , the Boat Race is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge along the River Thames . Oxford won by two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths . It was the seventh occasion that the race was umpired by Ronnie Howard , and the first time in the history of the race that both crews were coxed by women .

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

= = 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 ") . First held in 1829 , the race currently takes 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 . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1988 race by five @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths , with Cambridge leading overall with 69 victories to Oxford 's 64 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) . The event was sponsored by Beefeater Gin ; prior to the race , it was announced that the company would be sponsors for the following three years in a deal worth £ 700 @, @ 000 . Former Oxford Blue Ronnie Howard was the umpire for the race for the seventh occasion .

Cambridge were coxed by Leigh Weiss while Oxford 's cox was Alison Norrish ? it was the first time in the history of the Boat Race that both crews had female coxes . Prior to the race , Oxford coach Pat Sweeney criticised Weiss : " Their cox is so useless she might hit us . It 's not her fault , but Cambridge should have chosen someone who knows the river . " Weiss responded " I feel confident that I will make the decisions to make Cambridge win . "

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 = =

Cambridge were pre @-@ race favourites , as their crew weighed an average of almost 12 pounds (5 @. @ 4 kg) per rower more than their opponents , the largest difference since the first Boat Race . Cambridge 's Toby Backhouse weighed in at 16 st 11 lb (106 @. @ 3 kg) making him the heaviest rower in the history of the event . The Oxford boat featured three former Blues while Cambridge 's contained five . Cambridge 's chief coach was Mike Lees while Oxford University Boat Club selected Sweeney as coach , and Steve Royle to be their full @-@ time director .

= = Races = =

Cambridge won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station . After an early clash of blades , Oxford crept ahead and held a lead of three seconds by the Mile Post . Two minutes later Oxford had a clear water advantage and continued to pull away , holding a six @-@ second lead at Hammersmith Bridge . The lead had extended slightly by the Chiswick Steps ; Cambridge failed to make any ground on Oxford who swept under Barnes Bridge eight seconds ahead . Oxford maintained the lead to pass the finish post two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths clear .

In the reserve race , Oxford 's Isis won by one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ quarter lengths , their first victory in three years. while Cambridge won the 44th Women 's Boat Race by one length in a time of 6 minutes and 20 seconds , their second victory in three years .

= = Reaction = =

Umpire Ronnie Howard said " It was a damaging race , and I was looking for possible breakages " . Oxford 's stroke Richard Thorp explained " We expect it [clashing] but Ali [Norrish] has so much more experience of the Tideway " . Former Oxford coach Dan Topolski suggested that " the race is a battle of guts and willpower , and Cambridge settled to a steady rhythm too soon . "