

## = The Boat Race 1842 =

The 6th Boat Race took place on the River Thames on 11 June 1842 . The Boat Race is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge . In a race substantially interrupted by river traffic , Oxford beat Cambridge by a distance of four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths .

## = = Background = =

The Boat Race , first held in 1829 , 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 " ) . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having defeated Oxford by 22 lengths in the previous year 's race . They led overall with four wins to Oxford 's one .

Cambridge University Boat Club received the challenge to race from the Oxford University Boat Club secretary Fletcher Menzies in late @-@ 1841 , in which it was proposed that a race between the universities should take place in late June or early July of 1842 . Cambridge rejected the suggestion , maintaining that an Easter race would be preferable . A challenge from their captain , John Ridley , was then sent to Leander Club , whose reply bemoaned the fact that they had insufficient numbers to provide an eight , suggesting a four instead . This counteroffer was also rejected and Cambridge offered to row " any eight @-@ oared crew from any club or clubs whatsoever . " After further , somewhat acrimonious discussion , it was agreed that Oxford would challenge Cambridge on 11 June 1842 , with the caveat that the Light Blues would not row on the Thames before 8 June .

The race took place on a five @-@ and @-@ three @-@ quarter @-@ mile ( 9 @-@ 2 km ) stretch of the Thames between Westminster Bridge and Putney Bridge . The umpire for the race was W. H. Harrison , Commodore of the Royal Thames Yacht Club .

## = = Crews = =

The Oxford crew weighed an average of 11 st 9 @-@ 375 lb ( 73 @-@ 9 kg ) , about 5 @-@ 5 pounds ( 2 @-@ 5 kg ) per rower more than their Light Blue opposition . None of the Oxford crew had rowed in previous Boat Races while Cambridge saw five return from the previous year 's event , including John M. Ridley and Francis Penrose who had rowed in the 1840 race .

## = = Race = =

Cambridge won the toss and elected to start on the Middlesex side of the river , handing Oxford the Surrey side of the river . Both boats started below the arches of Westminster Bridge . Although Oxford made the better start , Cambridge pulled ahead and led until their course was diverted by river traffic including a steamer and a lighter , allowing the Dark Blues to retake the lead . Between the National Penitentiary and Wandsworth , according to MacMichael " they were not once free from the swell of the steamers " but continued to extend their lead . Once clear of the steamers , Cambridge began to close the gap in the last mile to Putney , but Oxford passed under Putney Bridge with a lead of four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 30 minutes 1 second . It was their first victory since the inaugural race in 1829 , hence their first win on " London water " .