

= The Boat Race 1885 =

The 42nd Boat Race took place on 28 March 1885 . 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 . In a race umpired by former Cambridge rower Robert Lewis @-@ Lloyd , the lead changed hands several times . Oxford won by a margin of two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 21 minutes 36 seconds . The victory took the overall record to 23 ? 18 in favour of Oxford .

= 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 takes place on the 4 @. @ 2 miles (6 @. @ 8 km) Championship Course on the River Thames in southwest London . The rivalry is a major point of honour between the two universities ; it is followed throughout the United Kingdom and as of 2014 , broadcast worldwide . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions having won the previous year 's race by two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths , while Oxford held the overall lead , with 22 victories to Cambridge 's 18 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) .

Oxford 's coach was G. C. Bourne who had rowed for the Dark Blues in the 1882 and 1883 races . There is no record of who coached Cambridge , who were seriously disrupted in the build @-@ up to the race , with Edric Wolseley Haig contracting mumps , J. C. Brown breaking a floating rib and William King Hardacre being introduced to the crew days prior to replace him . The umpire for the race was Robert Lewis @-@ Lloyd (who had rowed for Cambridge four times between 1856 and 1859) .

= Crews =

The Oxford crew weighed an average of 12 st 6 @. @ 75 lb (79 @. @ 1 kg) , 7 @. @ 75 pounds (3 @. @ 5 kg) more than their opponents . It was the heaviest crew to have ever featured in the Boat Race . Cambridge 's crew contained four rowers who had Boat Race experience , including Fraser Elmslie Churchill and Sidney Swann , both of whom were participating in their third race . Similarly , Oxford saw four former Blues return , with Douglas McLean making his third appearance and rowing with his brother Hector for the first time .

The race featured one registered non @-@ British participant in Oxford 's number two , J. S. Clemons , who originated from Tasmania .

= Race =

Cambridge were pre @-@ race favourites . Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Cambridge . The race started at 12 : 26 p.m. in fine weather on a moderate tide . Although Oxford made the better start , Cambridge held a half @-@ of @-@ a @-@ length lead by the time the crews passed the Craven Steps . With the advantage of the bend in the river , the Oxford stroke H. Girdlestone , without increasing the stroke rate , took his crew level , and ahead at the Mile Post . Although the Cambridge stroke Frederick Pitman tried to restore parity by encouraging a spurt , Oxford held the Light Blues off and by Hammersmith Bridge held a length 's lead . Despite appearing " as if the crew going to pieces " after some difficult conditions , Oxford extended their lead to two lengths by The Doves pub . Approaching Barnes Bridge , the Dark Blues had to avoid a skiff , allowing Cambridge to come back at them , before pushing on once again on to win by two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths in a time of 21 minutes 36 seconds .

After the race it was noted that the Oxford number three , P. W. Taylor , had dislocated his shoulder but had continued despite his injury .

