

## = The Boat Race 1854 =

The 12th Boat Race took place on the River Thames on 8 April 1854 . Typically held annually , the event is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge . The race was won by Oxford who triumphed over Cambridge by seven lengths .

## = = 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 . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having defeated Cambridge by nine lengths in the previous race . Cambridge led overall with seven wins to Oxford 's four .

There was no Boat Race in 1853 as the Henley Royal Regatta was scheduled for the same time as that proposed by Cambridge in their challenge to Oxford . The universities did however race each other that year , in the Grand Challenge Cup , which was won by Oxford . On 11 February 1854 , a challenge was sent to Oxford by the former Light Blue cox Thomas Selby Egan , who had assumed temporary captaincy of Cambridge University Boat Club , despite having coached the Dark Blues to victory in the 1852 race .

Although Oxford arrived at Putney as favourites to win the race , Cambridge 's style was enough to force the odds to evens . However , in a practice race , the Dark Blues defeated a watermen scratch crew easily and restored their position as pre @-@ race favourites . Both crews rowed in 65 @-@ foot ( 20 m ) long boats manufactured by Searle . The umpire for the race was Charles Jasper Selwyn and the starter was Edward Searle .

## = = Crews = =

The Oxford crew weighed an average of 11 st 1 lb ( 70 @. @ 1 kg ) , 5 @. @ 75 pounds ( 2 @. @ 6 kg ) per rower more than their opponents . Cambridge saw one rower return from the 1852 race in F. Johnson , while Oxford 's crew contained two former Blues in Nind and the Oxford University Boat Club president Olliver Meade King .

## = = Race = =

Oxford were pre @-@ race favourites . They won the toss and elected to start from the Middlesex station , handing Cambridge the Surrey side of the river . The race commenced at 10.40am , with Oxford pulling away from the start . The Dark Blues were clear of Cambridge by the time the crews reached the Crab Tree . By Hammersmith Bridge both coxes were forced to take evasive action as a result of a barge blocking their route . With a lead of two lengths after the bridge , Oxford continued to increase their lead , eventually passing the flag @-@ boat with a seven @-@ length advantage in a time of 25 minutes 29 seconds . It was their third consecutive victory and took the overall record to 7 ? 5 in Cambridge 's favour .

In a speech in the evening 's celebrations , Charles Selwyn , who had umpired this and the previous four Boat Races , declared that he was " no longer young and active enough " to continue to act in the capacity of umpire ; he would be replaced in 1856 by W. G. Rich , the former Cambridge University Boat Club president who had rowed in both the March and December races of 1849 .