

## = The Boat Race 1920 =

The 72nd Boat Race took place on 27 March 1920 . Generally 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 . As a result of the First World War , this was the first race for six years : Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having won the previous race held in 1914 . Both universities had participated in various Peace Regattas in 1919 . In this year 's race , umpired by former rower Frederick I. Pitman , Cambridge won by four lengths in a time of 21 minutes 11 seconds . The victory took the overall record to 39 ? 32 in Oxford 's favour .

## = = 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 1914 race by four and a half lengths , and led overall with 39 victories to Cambridge 's 31 ( excluding the " dead heat " of 1877 ) .

The First World War caused a six @-@ year hiatus in the event : during the conflict , at least 42 Oxbridge Blues were killed , including four of the previous race 's Cambridge crew and one from the Oxford boat . No race was arranged for 1919 , but the crews participated in the Peace Regatta at the Henley Royal Regatta that year . Taking part in the King 's Cup , Cambridge were defeated by the Australian Army crew in the semi @-@ final , the latter going on to defeat Oxford in the final . The Light Blues also took part in the Inter Allied Peace Regatta in Paris the same year , victorious in the final against New Zealand and Australia crews .

Oxford were coached by R. W. Arbuthnot ( who had rowed for Cambridge four times between 1909 and 1912 ) , Harcourt Gilbey Gold ( Dark Blue president for the 1900 race and four @-@ time Blue ) and E. D. Horsfall ( who had rowed in the three races prior to the war ) . Cambridge 's coaches were Steve Fairbairn ( who had rowed in the 1882 , 1883 , 1886 and 1887 races ) and Sidney Swann ( who had rowed in the previous four races ) . For the twelfth year the umpire was Old Etonian Frederick I. Pitman who rowed for Cambridge in the 1884 , 1885 and 1886 races . He was accompanied on his launch by Prince Albert and Prince Henry , Duke of Gloucester .

## = = Crews = =

The Cambridge crew weighed an average of 12 st 9 lb ( 80 @.@ 1 kg ) , 1 @.@ 25 pounds ( 0 @.@ 6 kg ) per rower more than their opponents . As a result of the six @-@ year hiatus , none of the participants had rowed in the Boat Race prior to this year . Three of the participants in the race were registered as non @-@ British : Oxford 's Hugh Cairns and Neil Harcourt MacNeil , and Cambridge 's John Alan Campbell were all Australian .

## = = Race = =

Cambridge won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station , handing the Middlesex side of the river to Oxford . The race started at 5 : 40 p.m. with a fair tide in front of " immense crowds " ; The Times reported that the attendance was the largest in the race 's history despite a rainstorm an hour before the race start . Both crews rowed 38 strokes and were level for the first minute until Cambridge , slightly reducing their rating began to pull ahead , holding a canvas @-@ length lead by the Mile Post .

As the crews passed below Hammersmith Bridge , the Light Blues held a three @-@ quarter length lead and with the bend in the river in their favour , pulled further ahead to be a quarter of a length

clear by The Doves pub . Facing a strong headwind , Oxford pulled in behind Cambridge and attempted a " bold bid for the inside of the Barnes corner " . Cambridge spurred in response and passed below Barnes Bridge three lengths ahead , and extended their lead to four lengths by the time they passed the finishing post in a time of 22 minutes 11 seconds . According to author and former Oxford rower George Drinkwater , Cambridge " rowed and in nice easy fashion " while Oxford " were very uneven at times and the crew seemed to labour badly in the rough water . " It was Cambridge 's second consecutive victory , albeit over a six @-@ year span , and took the overall record in the event to 39 ? 32 in Oxford 's favour .