

= The Boat Race 1829 =

The 1st Boat Race took place at Henley @-@ on @-@ Thames on 10 June 1829 . The race came about following a challenge laid down to the University of Oxford by University of Cambridge " to row a match at or near London , each in an eight @-@ oared boat during the ensuing Easter vacation " . Oxford wore dark blue jerseys while Cambridge wore " white with pink waistbands " . In front of a crowd estimated to be around 20 @,@ 000 , and according to the official record , Oxford won the race " easily " in a time of 14 minutes 30 seconds . The Boat Race became an annual fixture , and as of 2015 , has been contested 161 times .

= = Background = =

Coxed eight rowing had been popular at the University of Oxford for a number of years before a club was established at the University of Cambridge around 1827 . At a meeting of the Cambridge University Boat Club in February 1829 , it was decided to challenge Oxford " to row a match at or near London , each in an eight @-@ oared boat during the ensuing Easter vacation " . The race was deferred to the summer , as rowing did not start at Oxford until after Easter , and scheduled for 10 June 1829 for a prize of 500 guineas . During the pre @-@ race betting , Cambridge were the favourites to win the race .

Oxford wore a dark blue check outfit for the race , while Cambridge wore white with pink waistbands . The two boats were said to be " very handsome , and wrought in a superior style of workmanship " by The Morning Post ; Oxford 's green boat was built by Stephen Davies and Isaac King of Oxford , and was slightly the shorter , measuring 44 feet (13 m) . Cambridge 's pink boat was 18 inches (0 @.@ 46 m) longer , and built by Searle of Westminster . The umpires for the race were Mr. Cyril Page (for Oxford) and Mr John Stuart Roupell (for Cambridge) . Should the umpires disagree about any aspect of the race , they had recourse to consult the referee , whose name was not recorded .

= = Crews = =

The Cambridge crew weighed an average of 11 st 1 @.@ 75 lb (70 @.@ 5 kg) ; as the records for the Oxford crew are incomplete , no average weight can be calculated .

= = Race = =

The course for the race was a 2 @.@ 25 @-@ mile (3 @.@ 62 km) stretch of the River Thames between Hambleden Lock and Henley Bridge . Cambridge won the toss and elected to start on the Berkshire side of the river , handing the Buckinghamshire side to Oxford . According to the author William Fisher MacMichael , " it was as fine a day as our climate allows a June day to be . " The race had originally been scheduled to start at 6 : 00 p.m. but this was altered to 7 : 00 p.m. and was further delayed . Upon the start of the race , by which time around 20 @,@ 000 people were reckoned to be in attendance to watch , the Oxford boat was steered close to the Cambridge boat , forcing it to row close to the shore . This drew complaints from the Cambridge crew , who insisted that the race be restarted . The Oxford crew relented , and the race began for the second time at 7 : 55 p.m. In the early stages of the race , the two crews were evenly matched , but after they passed an island in the river , Oxford drew ahead .

Once they had passed the island , and were in the main flow of the river , the Oxford crew demonstrated their strength . The Morning Post report of the race records that both crews " put out the strength of their arms in excellent style " , and although the Cambridge boat maintained a higher stroke rate , Oxford maintained their lead throughout the rest of the race . Their margin of victory is variously reported as being between two and four lengths (although is recorded officially as " easily ") , in a time reported variously between 14 minutes and 14 minutes 30 seconds .

= = Legacy = =

The event , subsequently referred to as The Boat Race , or the University Boat Race , was held for a second time seven years later , in 1836 on the River Thames . It was then held intermittently until the 1856 race after which it became an annual event , interrupted only by the First and Second World Wars . As of 2016 , 162 Boat Races have been contested ; Cambridge lead overall with 82 victories to Oxford 's 79 , excluding the one " dead heat " recorded in the 1877 race .