

= The Boat Race 1931 =

The 83rd Boat Race took place on 21 March 1931 . 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 the former rower John Houghton Gibbon , Cambridge won by two and a half lengths in a time of 19 minutes 26 seconds . The victory took the overall record to 42 ? 40 in their favour . It was the first race for which John Snagge provided a radio commentary for the BBC .

= = 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 ; it is followed throughout the United Kingdom and , as of 2014 , broadcast worldwide . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1930 race by two lengths , and led overall with 41 victories to Oxford 's 40 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) .

Cambridge were coached by R. W. M. Arbuthnot (who had rowed for Cambridge four times between 1909 and 1912) , J. A. MacNabb (who had rowed in the 1924 race) and P. H. Thomas (a four @-@ time Blue between 1902 and 1905) . Oxford 's coaches were A. V. Campbell (who took part in the 1922 and 1925 races) , Stanley Garton (who had rowed three times between 1909 and 1911) and P. C. Mallam (a Dark Blue from 1921 to 1924 inclusive) . The race was umpired by former Cambridge rower John Houghton Gibbon who had participated in the 1899 and 1900 races .

The rowing correspondent for The Times stated that the crews were " well @-@ matched " , while The Manchester Guardian 's correspondent predicted a " gruelling struggle " . It was the first time John Snagge provided a radio commentary for the BBC . He would go on to commentate for the corporation every year up to and including the 1980 race .

= = Crews = =

The Cambridge crew weighed an average of 12 st 4 @.@ 625 lb (78 @.@ 1 kg) , 1 @.@ 125 pounds (0 @.@ 5 kg) per rower more than their opponents . Oxford saw three rowers return to their crew with Boat Race experience , including D. E. Tinne who was making his third consecutive appearance . Cambridge 's crew included five rowers who had participated in the event prior to this year , including their stroke T. A. Brocklebank who was also rowing for the third year in a row . All of the participants in the race were registered as British .

= = Race = =

Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Middlesex station , handing the Surrey side of the river to Cambridge . In wind gusting from the south @-@ west , the umpire Gibbons started the race . Cambridge took an early lead , although they were out @-@ rated by the Dark Blues . The boats were close , with oars nearly touching , for the first two minutes of the race , before the Light Blue cox steered to avoid a collision . By the end of Fulham Wall , Cambridge held a half @-@ length lead although Oxford kept in touch , and even reduced the deficit to a quarter of a length by the time the crews passed the Mile Post .

By the Crab Tree pub , Cambridge 's stroke Brocklebank made his first push for ten strokes to which Oxford responded in kind . A second push from the Light Blues however saw them pull away and lead by one and a quarter lengths as they passed below Hammersmith Bridge . As both crews encountered a headwind , they dropped to 29 strokes per minute , but their styles were markedly different : Cambridge were lively while Oxford laboured . By Chiswick Steps the lead was two and a

half lengths and three by Barnes Bridge . The Dark Blues pushed hard in the final stretches and slowly reduced Cambridge 's lead until Brocklebank put one final spurt in at Mortlake Brewery to secure the victory .

Cambridge won by two and a half lengths in a time of 19 minutes 26 seconds , their eighth consecutive win in the event and the narrowest margin of victory since the 1923 race . The win took the overall record in the event to 42 ? 40 in their favour .