

= The Boat Race 1977 =

The 123rd Boat Race took place on 19 March 1977 . 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 . Oxford won by seven lengths , their biggest margin of victory for more than 90 years . It was the first time in the history of the event that one of the crews , Oxford , used a plastic boat as opposed to a wooden one . It was also the first race to have an official sponsor in Ladbrokes .

In the reserve race , Cambridge 's Goldie beat Oxford 's Isis by seven lengths . Cambridge won the 32nd Women 's Boat Race .

= = 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 " hotly contested point of honour " between the two universities . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having won the 1976 race by six @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half lengths , with Cambridge leading overall with 68 victories to Oxford 's 53 (excluding the " dead heat " of 1877) .

The first Women 's Boat Race took place in 1927 , but did not become an annual fixture until the 1960s . Up until 2014 , the contest was conducted as part of the Henley Boat Races , but as of the 2015 race , it is held on the River Thames , on the same day as the men 's main and reserve races . The reserve race , contested between Oxford 's Isis boat and Cambridge 's Goldie boat has been held since 1965 . It usually takes place on the Tideway , prior to the main Boat Race .

Both crews rowed in monocoque boats for the first time in the history of the race ; Oxford used a Carbocraft shell (combining carbon fibre and plastic) for the first time , while Cambridge raced in a prototype developed by Imperial College London . Journalist and author Christopher Dodd referred to the boats as " the most up @-@ to @-@ date boats that the rowing world has seen " . The race was sponsored for the first time , by British betting company Ladbrokes , who would sponsor the event until the 1987 race when they were replaced by Beefeater Gin .

= = Crews = =

The Oxford crew weighed an average of 13 st 9 @. @ 5 lb (86 @. @ 7 kg) , just over 6 pounds (2 @. @ 7 kg) per rower more than their opponents . Returning Cambridge cox Joe Manser , at 9 st 11 lb , weighed 30 pounds (14 kg) more than his counterpart Colin Moynihan . Along with Manser , Cambridge saw the return of just one other former Blue in David Searle , while Oxford 's crew included three Boat Race participants in Bob Mason , Crispin Money @-@ Coutts and John Wiggins .

= = Race = =

Oxford started the race as " one of the strongest favourites of all time " , with The Guardian 's Christopher Dodd writing that " Oxford have some world @-@ class pedigree " . They won the toss and elected to start from the Surrey station . Within thirty seconds of the start , and in calm conditions , Oxford were a length ahead at Fulham F.C. They moved further ahead to a two @-@ length lead by the Mile Post , and a six @-@ second advantage over the Light Blues . Oxford extended their lead to three lengths and nine seconds by the time both crews shot Hammersmith Bridge , where the crews were subjected to choppy water , but between there and Chiswick Steps , Oxford raced further ahead , gaining at least two further lengths on Cambridge . Twenty seconds ahead at Barnes Bridge , the Dark Blues continued to press home their advantage , and passed the finishing post in a time of 19 minutes 28 seconds , 22 seconds ahead of Cambridge . It was Oxford

's third victory in four years , and the seven @-@ length margin of victory was their greatest since their win in the 1898 race .

In the 13th running of the reserve race , Cambridge 's Goldie beat Oxford 's Isis by seven lengths in a time of 19 minutes 35 seconds . It was Goldie 's first victory since 1974 . Cambridge won the 32nd Women 's Boat Race , their fourteenth victory in fifteen years .

= = Reaction = =

Oxford stroke Andy Michelmore was surprised by the conditions : " we couldn 't extend ourselves until the very end . " Of the rough water , Michelmore 's cox , Moynihan , said " a sinking was possible . We shipped , I think , a couple of inches of water and I was more than apprehensive " .