

## = The Boat Race 1891 =

The 48th Boat Race took place on 21 March 1891 . The Boat Race is an annual side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge along the River Thames . Oxford went into the race leading 24 ? 22 in the event overall . In total , eight rowers who were participating had previous Boat Race experience . Umpired by former Oxford rower Frank Willan , pre @-@ race favourites Oxford won by half @-@ a @-@ length in a time of 21 minutes 48 seconds . It was Oxford 's narrowest winning margin since the 1867 race .

## = = Background = =

The Boat Race is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing competition between the boat clubs of 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 , as of 2014 it is followed throughout the United Kingdom and broadcast worldwide . Oxford went into the race as reigning champions , having beaten Cambridge by one length in the previous year 's race , and held the overall lead , with 24 victories to Cambridge 's 22 ( excluding the " dead heat " of 1877 ) .

Cambridge were coached by Arthur Middleton Hutchinson ( who had rowed for the Light Blues in the 1881 and 1882 races ) while Oxford 's coach was R. C. Lehmann , former president of the Cambridge Union Society and captain of the 1st Trinity Boat Club . Although Lehmann had rowed in the trials eights for Cambridge , he was never selected for the Blue boat .

The umpire for the race for the third year in a row was Frank Willan who won the event four consecutive times , rowing for Oxford in the 1866 , 1867 , 1868 and 1869 races .

## = = Crews = =

The Oxford crew weighed an average of 12 st 3 @.@ 75 lb ( 77 @.@ 7 kg ) , 7 @.@ 75 pounds ( 3 @.@ 5 kg ) per rower more than their opponents . Cambridge saw four former Blues return to the boat , in Gilbert Francklyn , Edmund Towers Fison , John Friend Rowlatt and Cambridge University Boat Club president Gerard Elin . Oxford 's crew contained four rowers with Boat Race experience , including Guy Nickalls who was rowing in his fourth consecutive race , this year alongside his brother Vivian . The Dark Blues also featured cox John Pemberton Heywood @-@ Lonsdale for the third time in a row .

Four of the Oxford crew were studying at Magdalen College while five of the Cambridge crew had matriculated to Trinity Hall . Two rowers were registered as non @-@ British , F. Wilkinson for Oxford and Edward Wason Lord for Cambridge both hailed from Australia . Wilkinson was forced to leave the Oxford crew during practice as he suffered from influenza ; he was considered sufficiently fit to return to the crew but , according to Drinkwater , " never found his real form again " .

## = = Race = =

Oxford were pre @-@ race favourites , and won the toss and elected to start from the Middlesex station , handing the Surrey side of the river to Cambridge . The race commenced at 11 : 09 a.m. , in a northerly wind , and despite being outrated by Cambridge , the Dark Blues took an early lead and were a quarter of a length ahead as the crews passed Craven Steps . Just before the Mile Post , Oxford 's lead was around half a length , but Cambridge pushed on to take the lead by Hammersmith Bridge . Oxford responded and held a marginal lead as the crews passed The Doves pub , and the boats exchanged the lead several times along Chiswick Reach .

The Dark Blues took the lead and were three @-@ quarters of a length up at Barnes Bridge . Elin increased Cambridge 's stroke rate ; Charles Kent , the Oxford stroke responded and although the

bend in the river favoured the Dark Blues , Cambridge closed the gap . However , it was too late to stop Oxford taking the victory . The Dark Blues passed the finishing post with a half @-@ length lead in a time of 21 minutes 48 seconds . It was their second consecutive victory and the narrowest winning margin since the 1867 race , taking the overall record to 25 ? 22 in Oxford 's favour .