

= The Boat Race 1857 =

The 14th Boat Race took place on the River Thames on 4 April 1857 . Held annually , The Boat Race is a side @-@ by @-@ side rowing race between crews from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge . Oxford rowed in a keel @-@ less carvel @-@ built boat , the first time in the history of the race that such a construction method was used for one of the vessels . Umpired by Joseph William Chitty , the race was won by Oxford who triumphed over Cambridge by 11 lengths .

= = 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 . Cambridge went into the race as reigning champions , having defeated Oxford by half @-@ a @-@ length in the previous year 's race . They led overall with eight wins to Oxford 's five .

It was the first race to feature a keel @-@ less carvel @-@ built boat . Purchased personally by Oxford boat club president Arthur Heywood @-@ Lonsdale from Newcastle boat builder Matthew Taylor , the Oxford crew rowed a practice time of 19 minutes 50 seconds in it , considered " remarkable " in a boat with fixed seats . Lonsdale engaged Taylor to instruct Oxford how to " send his boat along as quickly as possible " , avoiding connotations of professional coaching which was banned in the Boat Race . Cambridge rowed in a boat built by Salter of Wandsworth . It was also the first race in which both crews rowed with round loom oars .

Oxford " soon showed signs of good pace " in practice and set the course record with 19 minutes 50 seconds , a time which would remain unbeaten until the 1873 race . Cambridge began their practice rows " very late " . The race was umpired by Joseph William Chitty who had rowed for Oxford twice in 1849 (in the March and December races) and the 1852 race .

= = Crews = =

Oxford saw four crew members return from the 1856 race in Gurdon , Lonsdale , Thorley and the cox , Elers , while Cambridge welcomed back just two former Blues in Lloyd and Snow . Oxford were marginally the heavier crew at an average of just over 11 st 9 lb (73 @. @ 8 kg) per rower , about 1 pound (0 @. @ 5 kg) more on average than Cambridge . The Oxford president , Heywood @-@ Lonsdale , rowed at number seven while his counterpart , R. Lloyd , rowed at six for the Light Blues .

= = Race = =

Oxford won the toss and elected to start from the Middlesex station , leaving Cambridge with the Surrey station . Starting soon after 11am , Oxford made a good start and at Searle 's boathouse (originally home to the Leander Club) were clear of Cambridge . They increased their lead to a length by the time they had reached " The Crab Tree " pub . Despite Cambridge making a number of pushes to try to recover the deficit , Oxford continued to pull away and completed the course 32 seconds ahead of Cambridge , and eleven lengths clear . The winning time was 22 minutes 5 seconds . It was Oxford 's fourth victory in the previous five races and represented the largest winning margin since the 1841 race . It was described in the Oxford Books ' account as " without doubt ... about the most hollow beating ever given to Cambridge by Oxford . "