Monday April 5th
75th Women's Boat Race 15:50
166th Men's Boat Race 16:50

“Stay safe. Stay away.
Watch The Gemini Boat Race 2021 live on the BBC.”
THE GEMINI
BOAT RACE
2021

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The Gemini Boat Race 2021

The Oxford and Cambridge University Boat Race, first raced in 1829, is one of the world’s oldest and most famous amateur sporting events.

Due to the ongoing restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the race has moved to Ely, which did host an unofficial Boat Race in 1944 when it was also not possible to race in London.

With many national restrictions still in place, the historic Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race will this year be a ‘closed event’ on the River Great Ouse at Ely in Cambridgeshire. There will be no access to spectators, to enable one of the event to return to the British sporting calendar in a COVID-secure way.

The Gemini Boat Race and the BBC coverage will leverage the power of technology to enable fans to enjoy the event at home and comply with all restrictions.

BRCL continues to work with East Cambridgeshire District Council and other local agencies to deliver the event within government guidelines.

The student athletes have been in training since September under national, university and sporting regulations.
This year sees the 75th Women’s Race and the 166th Men’s Race.

For the first time in history, the Men's Boat Race will be umpired by a woman; Olympian Sarah Winckless MBE.

Cambridge are the defending champions in the Men’s and Women's races.

This year the Blue Boat races will take place on the River Great Ouse at Ely, Cambridgeshire on Sunday April 4th.

The Reserve Races will take place in Ely, later in the year. Date TBC.

Athletes have been training for the event since September 2020, within government guidelines at all times.

Spectators will not be able to access the event, with many national restrictions still in place on race day including no spectators allowed at sporting events.

Due to COVID restrictions, there will be no Media Centre available at the event.

The race will be broadcast live on BBC One from 15:00-17:30 on Sunday 4th April.

THE 75TH WOMEN'S BOAT RACE

THE GEMINI BOAT RACE 2021

The Women's Boat Race first took place in 1927 but was raced intermittently until the mid-1960’s.

The first Women's race was held on the Isis in Oxford, with (according to The Times) “large and hostile crowds gathered on the towpath” as the men objected to women rowing.

The first few races were not decided in a side-by-side contest but were judged on “time and style”; the two crews were not allowed on the river at the same time! From 1935 the races became contests over 1000 yards or a 1/2 mile, on either the Cam, the Isis or on one occasion on the Tideway at Barnes.

From 1977 to 2014 the race took place at Henley.

In 2015 the Women's Blue Boat and Reserve Race moved to the Tideway and is now an integral part of The Boat Race programme with both men's and women's races taking place over the same course on the same day.

The Gemini Boat Race 2021 will be the 75th Women's Boat Race. Cambridge currently lead the results tally by 44 to 30.
The Men's Boat Race first took place in 1829 after two friends from Harrow School, Charles Wordsworth (nephew of the poet William Wordsworth), of Christ Church College, Oxford, and Charles Merivale of St. John’s College, Cambridge, met during the vacation in Cambridge and decided to set up a challenge.

The first Boat Race took place on 10 June 1829 at Henley-on-Thames, Oxford winning this race easily, and their winning boat can still be seen in the River & Rowing Museum in Henley.

For the next 25 years contests only happened on an irregular basis, moving to London for the second race in 1836.

A number of un-official races took place in the inter-war years when bomb damage made it impossible to race in London, including in Ely in 1944.

The Gemini Boat Race 2021 will be the 166th Men's Boat Race. Cambridge currently lead the results tally by 84 to 80 (with one dead heat recorded in 1877).
THE LOCATION - ELY

Photo Credit: Row 360 / BRCL
THE LOCATION - ELY

THE GEMINI BOAT RACE 2021

- Whilst The Boat Race is traditionally a free to attend event with spectators encouraged to attend, the 2021 Boat Race will take place behind closed doors in order to minimise the risk of transmission and spread of coronavirus.
- There will be NO ACCESS for spectators to watch the race.
- The Gemini Boat Race will take place in on the Great Ouse on the outskirts of the beautiful City of Ely on Sunday 4th April 2021.
- The event will be broadcast live on BBC1 from 15:00 to 17:30.
- The decision to relocate the 2021 event reflects the challenge of planning a high-profile amateur event in London with continuing COVID related restrictions as well as uncertainty regarding the safety and navigation of Hammersmith Bridge.
- The ancient city of Ely occupies the largest island in the Cambridgeshire Fens. The “Isle of Ely” is so called because it was only accessible by boat until the waterlogged Fens were drained in the 17th century.
- The Ely skyline is now dominated by the magnificent Norman Cathedral, which took almost 300 years to complete. Today, more that 1,000 years later, it still towers over the surrounding low-lying fenland and is known as ‘The Ship of the Fens’.
- Ely is the Location of the Cambridge University Boat Club Boathouse.

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THE BOAT RACE 1944 - ELY

diamond44
A Celebration of the 1944 University Boat Race
THE MEN'S BOAT RACE 1944

- In 1944, the Men's Boat Race took place at 3pm on Saturday 26th February.
- It was the third War Time Boat Race.
- The race was held over 1.5 mile course, finishing just before Queen Adelaide Bridge, Ely.
- Oxford University Boat Club won the race by 3/4 length.
- The 2021 race will start where the 1944 race finished.
- Watch the Pathé video using this link https://youtu.be/-voOSjlh_50

CUBC Paddle Out – Photo Credit Diamond 44
THE COURSE

THE GEMINI BOAT RACE 2021

- The 2021 Boat Race will take place on the River Great Ouse between Queen Adelaide and Littleport.
- The distance of the course is 4.89km and starts just North of the Prickwillow Road bridge over the River Great Ouse finishing just before the Victoria Street bridge at Littleport.
- Each race has 2 crews (8 rowers and 1 cox in each boat) racing alongside each other from the start to the finish line.
- The exact location of the start is in line with a plaque on the East (road side) riverbank pathway denoting the finish of the 1944 Boat Race.
- The Coxes will be approximately 13.5m apart on the start line.
- The blades will be approximately 6m apart.
- A pontoon infrastructure or 'Stake boat' will be placed onto the river to allow a person to position the rowing boats before the race begins. The start procedure will be managed by the race umpire.
- The finish line will be located just south of Victoria Road, marked on the bank of the river in line with the middle point of the stairs on the West (railway side) riverbank.
- The crews' momentum will bring them under the bridge and they will disembark their boats onto the jetty by the Swan on the River Pub.

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MEN'S BOAT RACE UMPIRE

The Boat Race is always umpired by an 'old Blue', with an ex-Oxford umpire alternating year-on-year with an ex-Cambridge umpire. The Umpire tries to ensure neither crew commits a "foul" by warning them to keep to their own racing line. If either crew should experience equipment failure before an agreed marker, approximately 500m into the race the Umpire may declare “No Race” and offer a restart or re-row the race.

SARAH WINCKLESS MBE

Sarah Winckless will be the first female umpire in the history of the Men’s Boat Race. Sarah studied Natural Sciences and Land Economy at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. She rowed for Cambridge in 1995, ’96 and ’97 and was CUWBC President in 1997. Sarah competed at multiple World Championships and three Olympic Games, winning a Bronze medal in 2004. Sarah has been a British Rowing Umpire for 9 years.

Sarah joined The Boat Races Umpires' Panel in 2013. Sarah has previously umpired Isis v Goldie, Osiris v Blondie and the Women's Boat Race.

Sarah was appointed a Steward to Henley Royal Regatta and was the first female to umpire in the event's 181-year history in 2016.
WOMEN'S BOAT RACE UMPIRE

For the first 69 Women's Boat Races, Umpires and race officials were drawn from an supportive group of highly experienced volunteers, who may not have attended either university. From 2015, with the move to the Championship Course, the Women's Boat Race began to follow the tradition of the Men's Race and with races umpired by 'Old Blues'.

JUDITH PACKER

Judith Packer first picked up an oar as an undergraduate at St Peter's College, Oxford where she studied Engineering.

Judith qualified as an Umpire in 2001 and officiated at the 2005 Rowing World Cup and 2006 World Rowing Championships. In 2009, she qualified as an International Rowing Umpire and was a National Technical Official for Rowing at 2012 Olympic Games and the GBR Umpire at 2016 World Rowing Championships Rotterdam, 2019 World Rowing Cup II in Poland and 2020 February World Indoor Rowing Championships Paris.

Judith joined the Boat Race Umpiring Panel in 2012 representing OUWBC and will become the first female Oxford umpire to umpire the Women’s Boat Race when on the same day as the Men's race.

Judith acted as Umpire for the Women’s Boat Race when it was last held at Henley in 2014. She has also Umpired the 2016: Osiris v Blondie Race and 2017 Isis v Goldie Race.
THE SEASON SO FAR

This has been a Boat Race season like no other!

On the water training for student athletes formally started in September 2020 although all the Clubs had run virtual development programmes during Lockdown 1 in Spring 2020.

During Lockdown 2 in November 2020 the students reverted to land-based training, with many using rowing machines set up in their student rooms alongside their bed and desk.

The crews were able to return to the water in December 2020 and the traditional Trial Vllls races took place over the planned course at Ely. This gave many of the OUWBC and OUBC athletes their first opportunity to train on the course and start to familiarise themselves with their surroundings.

Trial Vllls also created the opportunity for the traditional 'challenge' by the losing crew of the proceeding year to be made - but as with many things in 2020 this became a virtual event!

Lockdown 3 resulted in a further return to land-based training. In early March 2021 the Boat Race Company reached an agreement with British Rowing which allows a limited number of named athletes in each squad to return to on the water training from 8 March 2021. This was because a number of athletes in the squads were already included in British Rowing’s elite sport exemption for Elite Development Pathway programmes announced on 5 February 2021.

The crews are currently training in their home locations of Wallingford and Ely and Oxford will be moving to train in Ely from Wednesday 31st March.
Chief Coach Robert Weber’s squad has retained a strong core of student athletes from the 2020 Squad, which he believes has helped build a winning culture. Weber has employed a number of strategies to help his diverse squad coalesce around the goal of winning the 2021 Gemini Boat Race. These have included regular sports psychology sessions with Sports Psychologist, Helen Davis. The virtual training sessions where coaches and athletes erg together, and alumni sharing their Boat Race experiences to reinforce that every year presents a different challenge have brought the team together.

**COACH - ROBERT WEBER**

Robert Weber is buoyed by the work done in lockdown, stating, "It's great to be back on the water, we're all very grateful for the opportunity to row and race. It's been a challenging year, but we made the most of the opportunities this last lockdown presented. Our athletes have shown remarkable resilience, commitment and good humour over these last few months, despite the ups and downs. We've come through it in pretty good shape, and we're excited to race. We'll be well-prepared come the 4th of April."

**PRESIDENT - SOPHIE PAINE**

Girton College

Sophie says, "So many of us have trained for nearly two years for this race. We've been through highs and lows, though never losing sight of the goal. I know we are all itching to get to the start line – we can’t wait to fight fire with fire. The team has returned to the water with a renewed focus and a commitment to the mission. We know that we have a job to do and that every stroke counts. Although we are under a lot pressure due to having such little time to train on the water before the race, I’m really enjoying the process of getting better each day and coming together as a team after such a long time apart."
Chief Coach Rob Baker has a number of outstanding student athletes returning to the 2021 campaign alongside those who have arrived as 'Freshers'. President Callum Sullivan and his team have learned to adapt to an unfamiliar training programme whilst continuing to make physiological and technical improvements despite being unable to train on the water or in the Goldie Boathouse gym.

"We certainly won’t forget the 2021 Boat Race campaign in a hurry, I am writing this only five days after being back on the water and it feels quite surreal the race being just over three weeks away. Being back on the water has been great and the athletes have progressed technically very quickly, some have come back rowing better than before. Such a short period of time on the water leads to some very strong motivation to improve, you really have to make each stroke count when we have so little. Land training has been excellent and we have a good set of physiological results from the lockdown training. The next three weeks will involve some hard decisions and some decisive preparation. I can’t wait to see our guys race, we will be ready."

"The team has learned to adapt to an unfamiliar training programme, continuing to make physiological and technical improvements despite being unable to train on the water or in the Goldie Boathouse gym. For the majority of the team, Lockdowns have meant carrying out the programme alone, often in their bedrooms. In order to get the most out of these periods, we have maintained communication within the team and given athletes the resources to manage their own training at a high standard.

We have relished the opportunity to return to training for the last few weeks before the race. This period has been both intense and productive, allowing us to select and train a strong and efficient crew. Our focus now is on getting grittier and racier as we prepare to race Oxford. I am confident that we will be ready to beat Oxford on race day."
Oxford University Women’s Boat Club was established in 1927 and trains with a mission to win the Boat Race with the best supported and prepared team. The annual race against Cambridge University is now one of the oldest and most famous amateur sporting events, offering an unrivalled educational experience to the students who take part.

COACH - ANDY NELDER

"It’s been a season of firsts. The coaching teams have had to adapt and innovate, at a rate probably not seen before in our sport. What we’ve learnt since March 2020 will benefit future teams although we wouldn’t chose to run a rowing programme the way we’ve had to this year.

The rowers have found training alone difficult but shown impressive resilience in the face of academic and personal changes. The isolation has been hard on everyone and being able to prepare for the Boat Race albeit in short time frame has been hugely enjoyable for the team.

The Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race is a national treasure and being allowed to play our part in this edition is a privilege recognised by everyone involved. The Race will be different at Ely but the core values it represents will remain."

PRESIDENT - KAITLYN DENNIS

Green Templeton College

"Training this year has had many ups and downs, but the OUWBC squad continue to persevere despite being faced with adversity. Lockdown indoor training for the squad has seen many miles recorded on the ergs, bikes and running. It has been an opportunity to improve fitness, especially on the ergs with many squad members setting impressive Personal Best scores as a result.

The OUWBC and CUBC rivalry is unique and is something that draws rowers to trial for the Boat Race. After trialing during a pandemic, this year the two squads have been faced with many similar struggles and obstacles.

OUWBC is very thankful for the opportunity to have a closed and safe race in Ely."
OXFORD - MEN'S CHIEF COACH & PRESIDENT

Oxford University Boat Club was established in 1829 with the sole objective of winning the Boat Race. The annual race against Cambridge University is now one of the oldest and most famous sporting events, offering an unrivalled educational experience to the students who take part. The Club's objective remains unchanged.

COACH - SEAN BOWDEN

We are very appreciative of the opportunity to race and are looking forward to race day. It has been quite a transition to make from lockdown to forming our Blue Boat. The team will want to win, they are competitive people. They have put a lot of time and effort into this...and they will have to be of a really high standard in order to win. I expect to see people pushing themselves up to and beyond where they have been before....'

PRESIDENT - ALEX BEBB
St Peter's College

"Training has been a real challenge this year. It's never easy, but the twists and turns the pandemic has thrown at us has created a never ending series of adaptations to our daily lives. Some have been successful and some not so much. As a team I believe we've been able to find something productive through the winter and I'm excited to see how that translates to speed in the coming weeks.

After a bitter end to last season, there's more desire than ever to actually have a race. We're eager to put our bow ahead of Cambridge on normal years, and this year we bring the pent-up aggression that never got used last March.

Racing at Ely is both disappointing and exciting. I don't think anyone will say that they'd prefer to race at Ely over the Tideway, but we all realise there is no choice in the matter. The excitement comes as it is a unique opportunity to beat Cambridge on their home course, something everyone on our squad is keen to do."
CAMBRIDGE MEN'S BLUE BOAT

The Oxford and Cambridge men’s and women’s crews, their coaches and The Boat Race Company, who organise the event, would like to thank all fans, and the local communities of Ely and Littleport, for their incredible support and ask them to please help make this a safe and secure event by staying home to watch it on the BBC.

Theo Weinberger
St John's

Ben Dyer*
Gonville & Caius

Seb Benzecry
Jesus

Quinten Richardson
Fitzwilliam

Garth Holden
St Edmund's

Ollie Parish*
Peterhouse

Callum Sullivan*
(President)
Peterhouse

Drew Taylor
Clare

Charlie Marcus*
Trinity
Cox

• Denotes Returner
CAMBRIDGE WOMEN'S BLUE BOAT

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Adriana Perez-Rotondo* Newnham
Caoimhe Dempsey* Newnham
Abba Parker* Emmanuel
Sophie Paine* (President) Girton
Anouschka Fenley* Lucy Cavendish
Sarah Portsmouth* Newnham
Bronya Sykes* Gonville & Caius
Sarah Tisdall Lucy Cavendish
Dylan Whittaker* King’s Cox

* Denotes Returner
OXFORD MEN’S BLUE BOAT

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James Forward
Pembroke

Alex Bebb*
(President)
St Peter’s

Martin Barakso
Kellog

Felix Drinkall*
Lady Margaret
Hall

Tobias Schröder*
Magdalen

Jean-Philip
Dufour*
Lincoln

Joshua
Bowesman-Jones*
Keble

Augustin
Wambersie*
St Catherine’s

Jesse Oberst
Pembroke
Cox

* Denotes Returner
OXFORD WOMEN'S BLUE BOAT

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Megan Stoker
St Peter's

Anja Zehfuss
Green Templeton

Martha Birtles*
Mansfield

Amelia Standing*
St Anne's

Julia Lindsay
St Cross

Georgina Grant*
Harris – Manchester

Katie Anderson*
Brasenose

Katherine Maitland*
St Hugh's

Costi Levy*
Exeter
Cox

Denotes Returner
THE RESERVE RACES

OSIRIS VS BLONDIE

The Reserve Races are an important part of the Boat Race programme and usually take place on the same day as the Blue Boat Races. Due to the restrictions around return to on the water training it is not possible to do this in 2021.

ISIS VS GOLDIE

As a result the Reserve Races will take place later in the year. They will be organised by the Boat Race Company and will be run over the same course in Ely when when inter-club competition is allowed in line with British Rowing competition guidance.
BOAT RACE PARTNERS

BRCL is grateful for the support of all of its partners working to deliver The Gemini Boat Race in 2021.

GEMINI

GEMINI PRINCIPAL PARTNER

Gemini is a simple, reliable, and secure platform to build your crypto portfolio. Buying, selling, and storing your cryptocurrency has never been easier.

As the Principal Partner of the Boat Race, Gemini is excited to bring their retail and institutional cryptocurrency services to new audiences as they continue to build our presence in the UK.

WAINWRIGHT GOLDEN BEER - OFFICIAL BEER PARTNER OF THE BOAT RACE

Wainwright is the original motivational beer. It inspires people to reach their goals and offers the ultimate refreshment as the reward. It encourages people to ‘Find Your Mountain’ and those mountains can come in all shapes and sizes.

A true British Beer, Wainwright's brand ethos, inherited from the iconic Alfred Wainwright is the perfect match for The Boat Race.
BOAT RACE PARTNERS

CHAPEL DOWN - OFFICIAL CELEBRATION PARTNER OF THE BOAT RACE

As a truly British brand, Chapel Down is excited to work in partnership with one of the country’s most iconic sporting events. The Boat Race, and its sparkling wine will be enjoyed by the victorious squads at the finish line.

PLAYERLAYER

OFFICIAL PERFORMANCE KIT PARTNER OF THE BOAT RACE

We create sports clothing that is built to last. Our products are simple and functional, no fast fashion.

We use Eco Friendly materials. We believe that along with music and art, sport has the power to shape our culture and to drive change. We create clothing to help connect athletes to their team and to build bonds between players, coaches, staff and supporters. They all Belong.
BOAT RACE PARTNERS

BBC SPORT

BBC Sport is once again The Boat Race broadcast partner for the 166th Men's and Women's 75th Boat Race.

The BBC has been covering The Boat Race on television for 83 years.

During the course of over 2.5 hours on BBC 1, Clare Balding will present the build-up to the race with an array of guests and an eclectic mix of imaginatively crafted, creative and entertaining features to provide an insightful look into the mindset and personality of the crews. This year guests will discuss the challenges all the students have faced over the past 12 months to reach the start line.