# Sporting Traditions

# The University Boat Race

The two best-known English Universities Oxford and Cambridge are traditional rivals.

Their annual boat race on the River Thames in London is a long-standing tradition which began in 1829. On a weekend in late March or early April, the two teams race between Chiswick Bridge and Mortlake, against the flow of the river, for a distance of almost 4 and a half miles (6,779m). In a fast race, it takes about 17 minutes and about 600 strokes to finish the

The race is watched by up to 250,000 people on the banks of the river and millions more on television which makes it one of the biggest sporting events in the world.

#### The Teams

Traditionally Cambridge wear light blue and Oxford wear dark blue so the crew members in both boats are called 'blues'.

Each crew is called an 'eight' because it has eight rowers. The 'cox' (who is usually small and light) steers

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the boat. A good crew can row the boat at 18-22km/hour.

www.theboatrace.org

In the 2009 race, there were eight different nationalities amongst the crews and five of the competitors had competed in the Beijing Olympics. There were also two sets of brothers racing against each other in each team! The brothers said they couldn't speak to each other for a week before and after because the rivalry was so intense!

#### Who has won the most races?

The race is always exciting because it's never certain who will win. So far, Cambridge has won 79 races and Oxford 75 races. Cambridge won for 13 consecutive years from 1924-1936. There can also be surprises, for

example in 1978 the Cambridge Blue Boat

best-known = più conosciute long-standing = di vecchia data flow = corrente strokes = remate banks = sponde rowers = rematori **cox** = timoniere steers = governa

sank = affondò

Read the text and then complete this paragraph.

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The University boat race tak	es place on the		in	during t	he	season.
The Oxford blues wear	and tl	ne Camb	oridge blues wear		The crew can consist	of many
different	of student.					
A fast race can finish in abo	out	minut	tes. Around	people	watch the race from	the river
banks. So far	has won the mo	st races	but the winner is r	never guaranteed.		

ons and mark

2	Listen to an 'Oxford Blue' talking about the race preparations and m the words you hear.						
<u>oji</u>	September November	play freezing	calories	topic mentally			
	winter	weather	☐ tough☐ fifteen	helicopters			
	practices	wind	kill	win			



# **Other Sporting Traditions**

Lacrosse
is the oldest sport in
North America. It originates
from the Native American Indian
tribes and was played to resolve
conflicts. The first women's
Lacrosse game was played

in Scotland in 1890.

Now modern Lacrosse is played across the USA, Canada and all British

Commonwealth

countries.

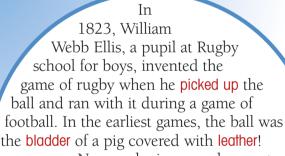
The modern game of golf originated in Scotland in the 15th century. The oldest course is in Musselburgh, Scotland,

Musselburgh, Scotland, and history says that Queen Mary of Scots played there in 1567. One of the most important competitions is The Ryder Cup, a golf trophy which is awarded biennially between teams composed of the best European and America

players.

The rules of cricket date officially from 1727.

The game is popular in ex-British colonies such as India, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa who play a series of matches called Tests against each other every year. Each Test lasts a maximum of five days. Each day has three two hour sessions with a traditional 20 minute break for tea in the afternoon.



Now rugby is a popular sport with a huge following for international competitions such as the Six Nations between England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France and Italy.

## 3 Read the information about traditional sports and mark true (T) or false (F).

1 Lacrosse is the oldest European sport.

T F

2 The Ryder Cup is a golf competition played every year.

T F

3 Each cricket Test lasts a maximum of three days.

TF

**4** The Six Nations is a competition of rugby between England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France and Spain.

course = campo
awarded =
consegnato
break = pausa
picked up =
raccolse
bladder = vescica
leather = pelle

### 4 How do you define a sporting tradition? With a partner, consider these questions.

- 1 Why do you think sporting traditions are kept alive?
- 2 How are traditional national sporting events connected to national identity?
- 3 Do traditional sports reveal the character of a nation?

