



Dec 15, 2019 21:39 GMT

Ben Stokes wins BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2019

Cricket lovers across England and Wales are celebrating the news that Ben Stokes was voted BBC Sports Personality of the Year for 2019.

The England all-rounder was crowned after topping a public poll conducted during the BBC's flagship annual sports review.

Stokes is only the fifth cricketer to win the prestigious award and the first since Andrew Flintoff was recognised for his Ashes exploits in 2005.

Stokes said: “Congratulations to all of the nominees. What you have achieved as individuals and what you’ve done for your sports is sensational.

“There are so many people to thank when you win something like this. It is an individual award but I play in a team sport and the best thing about that is you get to spend special moments with team mates, backroom staff and management who all make days like we had in the summer possible. I’m up here receiving this award but I’m not just up here by myself. Without the efforts that you (the team) put in this summer I wouldn’t be up here. Thank you so much.”

Viewers of the show voted for the Durham all-rounder after being reminded of his on-pitch heroics during the unforgettable cricketing summer of 2019.

His award crowned a momentous night for cricket. The England men’s one-day team were named Team of the Year, while the World Cup victory was voted Greatest Sporting Moment of 2019.

Stokes top-scored with an unbeaten 84 in the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup Final as England matched New Zealand’s total. He then hit eight off three balls in the crucial super over.

His efforts crowned a stellar tournament in which he recorded the highest batting average by an England player – 66.42 – and the second-best bowling economy rate at 4.83 runs an over.

Eoin Morgan, England’s World Cup-winning captain, said: “Ben is a thoroughly deserving winner. The team always comes first for Ben and he gives everything for the boys around him. He’s a great man to have in the dressing room and so talented with bat and ball.”

Stokes’ superb summer continued in the tied Specsavers Ashes series. England’s one-wicket win in the third Test at Emerald Headingley, when they made 362-9 to record their highest successful run chase in Tests, was anchored by his phenomenal unbeaten 135.

When No.11 Jack Leach joined him at the crease, England still required 73 to win. Leach contributed dogged defence and a single run while Stokes carried the side across the line to victory.

That was the highlight of a fantastic series for Stokes. He was England's top scorer with 441, and was the only man on the home side to contribute two centuries.

With the ball, he went above and beyond in a committed extended spell during Australia's second innings at Emerald Headingley to keep victory in sight.

Joe Root, England's Test captain, said: "We're all delighted that Ben has won. When his team really needed him in 2019, Ben delivered and he truly deserves this accolade. We're looking forward to him joining us in South Africa and we're hoping for more fireworks from Ben in the series down here and for many years to come."

Ashley Giles, Managing Director of England men's cricket, said: "I'm so pleased for Ben. His exploits this summer showed he is one of the finest cricketers in the world. I played alongside Andrew Flintoff when he won the award in 2005 and Ben's feats this year place him in the same bracket as Freddie, and Ian Botham before him.

"Ben and his family should be incredibly proud of what he has been able to achieve both professionally and personally over the last two years. We are also very proud of him and lucky to have him as a very important part of our team."

Tom Harrison, ECB Chief Executive Officer, said: "It's wonderful news that Ben has been named the winner of Sports Personality of the Year. This is richly deserved and it puts the finishing touch to an amazing year for Ben and for English cricket.

"Ben is a great person as well as a great cricketer. I'm absolutely delighted for him and his family. This award, for me, confirms his place in the hearts of the British public, he is not just one of the greatest cricketers we have ever had, but someone who has shown what it means to face into adversity and come through it. Well done Ben, we are all extremely proud of you.

"We're also thrilled that the England team who won the men's World Cup for the first time have been honoured too. No one who was at Lord's on July 14 will ever forget that extraordinarily dramatic win over New Zealand."

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Contacts



Ben Walker
Press Contact
Senior Media Manager
media@ecb.co.uk
+44 (0)7920 288 720