



Nov 10, 2023 14:00 GMT

Surrey's Lee Fortis claims double at Grounds Manager of the Year Awards

Surrey's Head of Ground Staff, Lee Fortis, has claimed both of the top awards at the 2023 Grounds Manager of the Year Awards.

Fortis and his team at the Kia Oval earned perfect marks for their pitches during the LV= Insurance County Championship season to win the Bernard Flack Memorial Trophy. It was the first time in the 51-year history of the awards that perfect marks have been awarded across the four-day season.

Fortis, who has been in his role since 2012, was unable to attend the awards

ceremony which saw his Deputy Head Grounds Manager Christy Sullivan receive the One-Day award on behalf of the Kia Oval team.

The event also celebrated the success of the all-female ground staff who produced the pitch for the England Women's Ashes T20 at Edgbaston in July.

Gloucestershire groundsperson [Meg Lay led the team](#) that included professional female groundstaff from across the country.

Scarborough's John Dodds won the Outground pitches trophy while the awards also celebrated the career of Andy Fogarty (Yorkshire CCC) who retired as Head Grounds Manager at Headingley before the 2023 season.

Fogarty was presented with a signed and framed England shirt by the other Grounds Managers, and was given a standing ovation, following a 40-year career that saw him win the Bernard Flack Memorial Trophy on four occasions and was a seven-time One-Day Award winner.

The man to step into Fogarty's role, Richard Robinson, was recognised for his first Test Match during the Men's Ashes summer which resulted in a memorable match at Headingley.

Retrospective recognition was also presented to Simon Tremlett (Wormsley Cricket Ground), Sean Williams (Gloucestershire CCC) and Scott Hawkins (Somerset CCC) for delivering Women's Test matches in previous years.

ECB Pitch and Grounds Advisor, Andy Mackay, said: "The standard of pitches in white and red-ball cricket continues to be very high overall and the competition for the top spots is exceedingly tough. The award winners deserve this recognition for the consistently outstanding pitches they have produced during the summer.

"The dedication, sacrifice and commitment of all of the grounds managers is beyond reproach and it is great that we can get everyone together to recognise the contribution they make to the game and to celebrate their successes.

"Yet again, every venue's grounds teams have given their all to deliver pitches and facilities that allow the players to put on a thrilling spectacle for

all of the fans who attended cricket this summer.”

Full list of awards winners:

Bernard Flack Memorial Trophy (Multi-Day pitches)

Winner: Lee Fortis (Kia Oval)

Runner-up: Matt Merchant (Emirates Old Trafford)

Commendation: Vic Demain (Seat Unique Riverside)

One-Day pitches:

Winner: Lee Fortis (Kia Oval)

Runner-up: Richard Robinson (Headingley)

Commendations: Karl McDermott (Lord's), Adrian Llong (The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence, Canterbury)

First Test Match Recognition Awards:

Richard Robinson, Headingley; England Men v Australia, 2023

Simon Tremlin, Wormsley Cricket Ground, England Women vs Australia 2013

Sean Williams, Seat Unique Bristol, England Women vs India 2021

Scott Hawkins, Taunton, England Women vs South Africa

Outground Pitches Award:

Winner: John Dodds (Scarborough CC)

Runner-up: Josh Marden (Beckenham)

Commendation: Nick Johnson (Blackpool CC)

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Contacts



Matt Somerford

Press Contact

Communications Manager - Domestic Cricket

media@ecb.co.uk

+44 (0)7551 134 716