

# Stokes named ICC Men's Test Cricketer of 2022

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**The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk:** England all-rounder Ben Stokes defined the year of Test cricket more than any other in 2022 and has been deservedly named the winner of the ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year award. On the basis of his numbers alone, England's talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes had an excellent year in the whites of international Test cricket. But sometimes the game is about more than just numbers, and in 2022 Stokes – along with new England head coach Brendon McCullum – completely transformed the form, fortunes and style of England Men's Test team.

Players and teams have played extremely attacking cricket before. But Stokes has delivered a new level for his consistent commitment to England's entertaining and aggressive approaches with bat, ball and in the field. Since taking over as England captain, Stokes has led the team to nine wins from 10 Tests, completing series victories over New Zealand and South Africa at home, beating India in the one-off postponed Test to level the series at 2-2, and hammering Pakistan 3-0 away from home – England's best ever margin of victory in the country. Prior to his appointment as captain, England had been beaten in each of their four most recent completed series and had won just one of their previous 17 Tests.

As a captain Stokes was hugely impressive, setting clever traps with his fields and utilising his bowlers brilliantly throughout the year. He was also fair but decisive with his selection decisions, bringing in new faces when required but not afraid to leave out form players if the conditions merited it. With the bat Stokes enjoyed a strong 2022, scoring 870 runs at an average of 36.25 and an aggressive strike rate of 71.21, notching up two centuries. His first-innings 103 in the second Test against South Africa was the standout knock of his year, giving his team some impetus immediately after their only Test loss of the English summer. Stokes also took four wickets in that match, finishing the South Africa series with 10 dismissals to his name and an average of 15.70.

While his overall numbers with the ball for 2022 don't jump out as exceptional (26 wickets at 31.19), Stokes deployed himself in a number of different tactical roles throughout the year, prioritising impact and team balance over his individual statistics. Team records tumbled under Stokes' captaincy. And it was with the bat that the records were most eye-catching. England's scoring rate of 4.13 across 15 Tests in 2022 was the second highest in history and the most since Australia in 1910. Those stats include the away defeat to West Indies and the end of the Ashes loss under Joe Root. In the matches in which Stokes led England, the team struck at a game-changing 4.77 per over.

England's 506/4 on the opening day of the first Test against Pakistan was the most runs scored by any team on the first day of a Test match. Even more impressively, they came from just 75 overs as bad light ended play prematurely. And of the front-line batters (from numbers one to six) to have scored at least 100 runs in Test cricket in 2022, five of the seven highest strike rates belong to English players – of which Stokes is one. Only outliers Rishabh Pant and Travis Head stop an English sweep of those stats. Stokes was earlier this week named as the captain of the ICC Men's Test XI for 2022. He was joined in the select XI by his fellow ICC Test Cricketer of the Year Award nominees – his compatriot Jonny Bairstow, Australia's Usman Khawaja and South African bowler Kagiso Rabada.