

Essex Groundsman Celebrates 25 Years With FA Groundsman Of The Year Award

When you're coming up to retirement, and have given 25 years of your life to rugby and football, it's nice to think you are appreciated. Eric Agger knows that feeling more than most, having won the FA Groundsman of the Year 2005-2006 award, representing Leytonstone United FC, Essex County Football Association.

As a member of the Institute of Groundsmanship, the leading membership organisation for grounds professionals involved in the management of sports pitches, landscape and amenity facilities, Eric Agger's 25 years as a groundsman with Ilford Wanderers Rugby Club including from 1986, two decades with Leytonstone where he now looks after one football pitch, two rugby pitches and a cricket pitch.

"They get plenty of wear and tear," he says, "especially as the pitches also form part of the cricket outfield and so you have to deal with lots of divots.

"You don't always have a lot of budget for new grass, etc, but you do the best with what you have. And with regular facing and aeration, you manage to keep on top of things."

And what of the award itself? "It came like a bolt from the blue, to be honest, but it's great to have achieved this. When you're just a few years away from stepping down and you receive something like this, it's very special."