Koen Martens from Belgium wins the STIHL TIMBERSPORTS® Benelux Championship 2020 third time in a row and qualifies for the World Championship in Munich

*Haelen, The Netherlands, Saturday, October 3, 2020 -* ***Koen Martens*** *from Belgium once again shows that he is the best national sportsman in wood chopping. He chopped and sawed his way to first place with ease. After* ***six very tough disciplines****, he confirmed his role as the favorite.* ***This way Koen Martens secures his place in the qualifier for the Individual World Championship in Munich on Sunday, November 29. Second and third place went to the Dutch athletes Martijn Harms and Ben Terpstra.***

*Once again* ***Koen Martens*** *has proven that training and both sports and mental guidance pay off. He came to the* ***perfect combination of strength, endurance and material control. Koen won all non-motorized disciplines.******Martijn Harms*** *finished in second place. He showed that* ***experience*** *is also very important in this unique sport.* ***Ben Terpstra*** *took* ***third*** *place. After all,* ***Rik van Drielen*** *proved that years of experience also play his part. He just missed the podium but set a great time in Hot Saw.*

Competition course

Most of the athletes were in great shape and several personal bests were set just like last year. Especially **Redmer Knol,** the **best Dutch athlete in the qualifying round**, did great with no less than **5 personal bests**, so he was expected to find his way to the podium. Unfortunately, his springboard discipline did not go smoothly in the second round, even though he scored his fifth personal best time. So no pay for work for the youngest participant who also spent the most training hours of all Dutch participants. Redmer finally had to settle for **sixth place** in the final classification.

In the royal discipline, Ben Terpstra (Netherlands) and **Robin Cuvelier (Belgium)** also clocked new personal best times. Ben Terpstra’s springboard performance put him on a deserved third place. It was also Ben Terpstra, together with Martijn Harms (Netherlands) who set a new personal best time in the Hot Saw finale. **But no one did better than Rik van Drielen. He smashed the Hot Saw Benelux record with a new best time of 5 seconds, 77 hundredths.**

Ultimately, **Koen Martens** had built up a large lead, so the Benelux title could not slip away. By **winning 4 out of 6 disciplines**, he can call himself the **more than deserved Benelux champion**. Together with **Martijn Harms who will represent the Netherlands, Koen qualifies for the Individual World Championship in Munich on November 29** this year.

*Weather circumstances were not so good, with rain pouring down from the sky and with temperatures around 12 C° it felt rather fresh. Psychologically the athletes were also on their own without an audience, so they had to keep motivating themselves to go to the extreme. The livestream was followed by all the fans, hitting more views then ever was the case for the STIHL TIMBERSPORT® Benelux Championship.*

Team Cup of the Low Countries

To make it even more interesting for the livestream viewers, a Team Cup of the Low Countries was organized for the first time. Both national teams selected their best athletes for **two exciting relay races**, driven and encouraged by **team captains Robin Cuvelier (BEL)** and **Rik van Drielen (NDL).**

In the first of two relay races of four disciplines, the Belgians took a penalty of 15 seconds, so despite their better time setting, they were beaten closely by Team Netherlands with less than 3 seconds. The Dutch team came out very strongly in the second relay race. It was a tight race, with the Dutch team going faster but Team Belgium seemed to be returning. However, no matter how strong Koen Martens ended in standing block chop, Martijn Harms managed to finish it off for his team 2 seconds faster. **This way, the Dutch team returned home with the Team Cup of the Low Countries.**