



For Immediate Release

Source: Magnolia Pictures & American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation

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HOME OF THE AMERICAN BIRKEBEINER TO HOST NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE OF MAGNOLIA PICTURES' 'THE LAST KING' ('BIRKEBEINERNE')

American Birkebeiner is North America's Largest Cross Country Ski Marathon

Hayward, WI (February 8, 2016) - Magnolia Pictures, in collaboration with the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation, is pleased to announce the North American premiere of the extraordinary Norwegian feature film **THE LAST KING**. The event will mark the first time the film will be viewed publicly on North American soil.

THE LAST KING is rooted in Norwegian history and tells the story of the very legacy upon which the American Birkebeiner ski marathon is based. In 1206, Norway was ravaged by civil war, and a boy, Prince Haakon Haakonsson, the illegitimate baby son of a Norwegian king, was guarded in secrecy. He was a boy that half the kingdom was out to kill and whom two brave Birkebeiner warriors, so called because of their birch bark leggings, vowed to protect with their very lives by skiing the infant prince over the Norwegian mountains to safety. **THE LAST KING** is the story of the escape which forever changed the history of Norway.

"Once we learned of the American Birkebeiner ski marathon, we knew we wanted to share the film with this fiercely dedicated group of adventurous spirits," said Neal Block, Magnolia Pictures Head of Distribution. "The American Birkebeiner is a true celebration of the courage, perseverance, character and determination of the warriors at the heart of **THE LAST KING**."

Each February an estimated 40,000 skiers and spectators gather in Cable and Hayward, Wisconsin to take part in North America's largest and greatest ski race, the American Birkebeiner. In homage to the races roots, every year the American Birkebeiner reenacts the historic flight of the Birkebeiner warriors, Torstein and Skervald, when two skiers in full traditional costume and on wooden skis reenact the escape along the entire 55K classic cross-country race course, surrounded by over 10,000 other determined skiers. Along the race course, the warriors are joined by Prince Haakon's mother, Inga. The Birkebeiner warriors carry a baby doll throughout the journey and pick up an infant child to ski with them over the International Bridge, toward the finish line, and the thousands of cheering fans on Hayward's snow-covered Main Street. It is a true celebration of the roots, legacy and traditions of the race.

"We can't think of a more fitting place to debut **THE LAST KING** and can't imagine an audience more passionate about this story," said Ben Popp, American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation Executive Director. "We are grateful to Magnolia Pictures for the honor of sharing this legacy film with skiers and fans of the Birkebeiner story."

An iconic world-class, International, sporting event, for over 40-years the American Birkebeiner has helped shape the lives of tens of thousands of participants from elite athletes to recreational citizen skiers. To date, over 250,000 skiers have finished American Birkebeiner ski events.

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The film will premiere at the Park Center in Hayward, Wisconsin as part of the American Birkebeiner's week of Nordic festivities. The North American premiere will include three showings, Saturday, February 20, 2016 at 5:00pm and 8:00pm, and Sunday, February 21, 2016, at 12:00pm. Tickets will be sold in advance and exclusively at www.Birkie.com. Tickets are \$20 apiece and are available [here](#). Magnolia Pictures is graciously donating \$5 from every ticket sold to the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation to further their mission of promoting healthy, active lifestyles for people of all ages.

The action film inspired by actual events in Norwegian history is directed by Nils Gaup, who won an Oscar nomination for another wintry Norwegian film called THE PATHFINDER (VEIVISEREN). A Paradox Rettigheter AS production, distributed by Magnolia Pictures, THE LAST KING stars Kristofer Hivju (Torstein) and Jakob Oftedal (Skjervald) in the two main roles of Birkebeiner heroes Torstein and Skjervald. Hivju (Torstein) is perhaps best known for his role as wildling leader, Tormund Giantsbane, on HBO's fantasy series GAME OF THRONES. THE LAST KING is scheduled to premiere in Norway in early February, with the unofficial North American Premiere in Hayward, WI during the American Birkebeiner week of festivities. Magnolia Pictures has slated the US theatrical release for late spring or early summer of 2016. This film is not yet rated. The official trailer for THE LAST KING may be viewed in [English](#) and [Norwegian](#).

About Magnolia Pictures

Magnolia Pictures is the theatrical and home entertainment distribution arm of the Wagner/Cuban Companies, a vertically-integrated group of media properties co-owned by Todd Wagner and Mark Cuban that also includes the Landmark Theatres chain and AXS TV. Recent releases include Swedish Oscar selection and Golden Globe nominee FORCE MAJEURE, acclaimed documentary IRIS from Albert Maysles, Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner THE WOLFPACK, Buckley vs. Vidal doc BEST OF ENEMIES from Morgan Neville and Robert Gordon, Sean Baker's TANGERINE, Alex Gibney's STEVE JOBS: THE MAN IN THE MACHINE, Andrew Bujalski's RESULTS, Michael Almereyda's Stanley Milgram biopic EXPERIMENTER, and Roy Andersson's A PIGEON SAT ON A BRANCH REFLECTING ON EXISTENCE. Upcoming releases include Arnaud Desplechin's MY GOLDEN DAYS, Terence Davies' SUNSET SONG, Tobias Lindholm's A WAR, adventure thriller THE WAVE, and many more.

About the American Birkebeiner® Ski Foundation and Birkie® Events

Located near Hayward and Cable, Wisconsin, the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF), a 501(c)(3) organization, is known for its signature American Birkebeiner Ski Marathon held each February. Today, the Birkie has grown to encompass a variety of year-round, silent sport events that promote a healthy, active lifestyle for thousands of outdoor fitness enthusiasts. The ABSF also acts as steward of the legendary Birkie Trail, providing year-round grooming, mowing and maintenance to all 107 kilometers. From the iconic American Birkebeiner ski race, to the Birkie Trail Run & Trek, and Fat Bike Birkie, the ABSF and the Birkie Trail attract skiers, runners, bikers, trekkers, and hikers, from casual day-trippers to elite athletes. Learn more at www.birkie.com. BIRKIE Ski. Run. Bike. Live!

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