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"AMERICAN FLYERS"

"American Flyers," directed by John Badham from a screenplay by Oscar winner Steve Tesich, opens Friday, November 22, 1985 at theatres throughout the Bay Area.

The focus of the film is the relationship between two brothers played by Kevin Costner and David Grant set against the toughest bicycle race in America. "American Flyers" was filmed at the 1984 Coors International Bicycle Classic shot entirely on location in Colorado. The film also stars Rae Dawn Chong, Alexandra Paul, John Amos and Janice Rule.

From Warner Bros., "American Flyers" is a W.W. Productions presentation of a John Badham Film. It is rated 'PG-13' and the running time is 114 minutes.

# # #

## "AMERICAN FLYERS"

### - Production Information -

Being a "stage racer" means your race is never finished. Every day there is a new level for victory--a personal best to set and another stage to run.

In bicycle parlance, David Sommers is a "wheelsucker," drafting through life, lacking the sprint to bridge the gap between the pack and the break.

But he is about to learn the credo of a stage racer.

DAVID GRANT is David Sommers and KEVIN COSTNER plays his brother Marcus. Separated after the loss of their father, they undertake a cross-country journey together to rekindle their relationship. Reunited, they share the challenge of a grueling three day bicycle race--which promises a reward far greater than winning the race itself.

"The focus of the film is the brothers' relationship set against the toughest bicycle race in America," says director John Badham. "It's a nice mixture of action and character."

Warner Bros. presents "American Flyers," directed by John Badham from a screenplay by Oscar winner Steve Tesich. Gareth Wigan and Paula Weinstein are the producers under their newly formed W.W. Productions banner. Gregg Champion is associate producer.

RAE DAWN CHONG also stars, along with ALEXANDRA PAUL, JOHN AMOS and JANICE RULE.

The amalgam of these dramatic elements lets the director

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combine the sensibilities of his varied movie career. Badham has filmed such hard action pictures as "Blue Thunder," gentle character dramas such as "Whose Life Is It Anyway?" and high energy youth sagas like "Saturday Night Fever." He feels that "American Flyers" blends the qualities of each of these pictures in a unique setting.

"'American Flyers' is about relationships, not about hardware," Badham explains. "And that's a welcome change for me.

"Some people who saw my last two movies said 'Oh, Badham? Yeah, he does those action pictures.' Yet many of my previous films have concentrated on relationships. 'Saturday Night Fever' is much more about relationships than about disco dancing. 'Whose Life' is certainly a quiet character piece."

The primary relationship in "American Flyers" is of the two brothers--differing in age by about ten years; in accomplishments, by a lifetime.

"The older brother has a medical degree and is involved in sports research. He's also been a champion cyclist," the director notes. "In a two-fold effort to get his brother to grow up a little bit, and also to achieve something of importance to himself, he starts training him and enters him in this race.

"Marcus (the older brother) doesn't really expect David to do much more than to relate to other people. But he does know that he has a great athletic ability which, properly nurtured, could really turn into something."

"Later, there is a reaffirmation of the love between these

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two brothers which has been laying fallow for so many years" says producer Gareth Wigan.

"I think there are elements of identification and wish fulfillment in the film's relationships" he continues. "I became emotionally involved with the physical and emotional courage the first time I read the story. I suspect audiences will feel the same way."

"'American Flyers' is about going beyond a certain point where we're all urged to stop," says screenwriter Tesich. "That point is called 'good enough.' The film is about discovering exactly what you're capable of doing, ignoring the advice that says, 'you've done it. That's fine.'"

"That's the credo of the 'stage racer.' You can't just say, 'well, today I did it.' You're never done. You do it today and tomorrow and the next day. And that's what it means to have a life."

Tesich, who spent the past two years writing plays after receiving wide critical praise for his 1982 adaptation of John Irving's best-selling novel "The World According to Garp," had been wanting to write a big scale cycling picture for quite some time.

"I love the sport," explains Tesich who is also a former competitive rider. "I always knew that after 'Breaking Away,' which introduced the American public to the sport on a small scale, that I could do something that showed cycling in a much bigger, more visually spectacular setting. But I needed a very 'hard' story to support it."

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Tesich won the Oscar for "Breaking Away," his first produced screenplay, which was directed by his close friend Peter Yates. The story of a group of boys growing up in a small college town in Indiana utilized Indiana University's "Little 500" bicycle race for its dramatic climax. It was a race which Tesich himself had entered and won when he was a student there.

"American Flyers" uses for its backdrop the largest, most prestigious race in the U.S.--the Coors International Bicycle Classic, which in 1984 hosted Olympic teams from over thirty nations. Most of America's Olympic cycling medalists competed in the early stages of this ten day race.

"The Coors race presented us with a number of technical challenges," producer Wigan says, "and I can't think of any other picture where so many crucial character scenes take place during the course of sports action. Badham had to combine that hard action with deliberate character shadings."

In bringing the sports action to the screen, Badham strove to achieve a realism that would allow him to interweave scenes of actual bicycle racing with the simulated cycling drama dictated by the screenplay.

Every conventional camera mount was used and several others were devised to give Badham access to angles that lent unprecedented visual excitement to the film's action sequences.

Among the more unique devices were stuntman Scott Dockstader's motorcycle sidecar rig which permitted smooth,

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mobile camera maneuvering at speeds up to fifty miles per hour; cyclist Rick Denman's bicycle mounts; and Bill Bennett's remarkable Terra-Flite crane which allowed remotely controlled action shots to move in one fluent motion, from shoetop to treetop.

"Hopefully, cyclists will be able to look at this movie and feel that it represents what their sport is all about," states the director. "We made a tremendous effort to make it as accurate as possible. The actors were all concerned that they not look inexperienced, and by the end of shooting, everyone involved gained a respect for these athletes' extraordinary abilities."

Badham learned firsthand his healthy admiration for cyclists who often pedal a thousand miles during the course of a ten day race: The director trained alongside Grant, Costner and others for two hours every morning, beginning six weeks prior to the start of production. Many of these amateurs hadn't been on a bicycle since childhood, but they increased their endurance to the point of wheeling at speeds of 30-35 m.p.h. for sixty miles at a clip.

"The first day we started riding, the fellas all went about three miles and had to get off the bikes and lay down in the grass to recover," recalls Badham. "By the time we got to Grand Junction (Colorado), they all went out on one of their days off and rode to the Colorado National Monument --which is a 45 mile trip with about a 2,000 ft. climb."

The training not only helped the actors get in physical

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condition but aided in establishing their camaraderie.

"Because Kevin and I started training six weeks before the movie, we developed a relationship very early," David Grant notes. "When we started working, it was just so much easier because we knew each other and liked each other. It gave us such a head start."

Tesich also trained with the actors and director. Though he no longer has the time for competitive riding, his racing experience was of great benefit to the actors.

"Steve gave us all lots of insight that helped us crawl inside our characters' skins."

Tesich was present during the filming of every cycling sequence. Along with Coors Classic technical director Bill Woodul, Badham relied upon his expertise in maintaining the technical integrity of the film.

"By drawing the best creatively from each other, Steve and John made the partnership of writer and director work as well as I have ever seen," comments Wigan who first met Tesich while serving as production executive at Twentieth Century Fox prior to the production of "Breaking Away."

Wigan and co-producer Paula Weinstein, former president of United Artists' motion picture division, presented the project to Badham.

While conferring with Tesich on early drafts of the screenplay, Badham began the task of casting.

"Warners was great in saying 'we don't care about stars, just get the best people you can find,'" states

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Badham who enjoyed great success using a relatively unknown John Travolta in "Saturday Night Fever" and Matthew Broderick in "WarGames."

"Newcomer Kevin Costner had the lead in 'Fandango,'" the director explains. "And I'd seen a lot of footage on that, so I immediately thought of him for the older brother. For the part of the younger brother, I had tested a lot of guys, but when David came in to read I had an instant gut feeling about him. There was just some innocent quality and a likeability about him that was phenomenal."

On the road to Colorado (where the race will occur), the younger brother David finds loving support from a pretty hitchhiker named Becky, embodied from tennis shoes to two-tone hair style by Alexandra Paul.

"She's on her way to California where a lot of people with big dreams go," notes the former fashion model who emigrated from New York to Los Angeles after landing her first acting role in the television feature "Paper Dolls." "She's from a middle class home in the Midwest. I don't think she's ever really tried to be spectacular in anything she's done. She's very 'with it' and also very impressionable. In the '60s, if she was old enough, she would have been out in the streets protesting. In the '70s, maybe she would've taken up jogging."

Though all set out on the journey for different reasons, they arrive at the race with a common goal--to win over the favored Soviet team and Marcus' principal rival Barry Muzzin (played by Luca Bercovicci). But ultimately there are other

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victories that become even more important.

"It's a remarkable symbiotic relationship that has to happen in bicycle racing," concludes Badham. "You help each other get up hills, you help each other get down and around corners, and yet you're in fierce competition with the people you're helping--even among members of your own team, there can only be one winner.

"The relationships in this film are primarily nurturing and supportive, but it's the conflict between these people that ultimately results in their growth. That's how it is, I suppose, in any human interaction. The sport of bicycle racing fascinates me in that it contains elements of collaboration as well as conflict. The American public hasn't yet discovered the sport to any great degree. Maybe this film will help change that."

Call it foresight or coincidence but John Badham has had the good fortune of being in the advanced guard of two popular American cultural trends: disco in the late 1970s and computer games in the early 1980s.

Perhaps he has again heard the pulse of the country--whistling through the spokes of a pair of aluminum wheels.

#### About the Cast...

KEVIN COSTNER lends fire and maturity to the role of Marcus Sommers, a man driven to excel, who encourages his younger brother to strive to reach the full measure of his potential. But Marcus is also a man haunted by family ghosts

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and unfinished business that only his brother's love can force him to confront.

Costner, who most recently starred opposite Jane Alexander in the moving anti-nuclear drama "Testament," has been cast in--and cut out of--some of the most popular pictures of the past two years. He performed an important role in "Francis," opposite Jessica Lange, only to have it end up on the cutting room floor. He also played the pivotal part of Alex, the suicide victim in "The Big Chill," but found himself cut out of the film when director Lawrence Kasdan made his final edit. A meaty role in "Table For Five," starring Jon Voight, was also whittled down to nearly nothing.

Such disappointments could have destroyed a less determined talent, but Costner hardly had time to be concerned. In addition to "Testament," he was seen on screen in Ron Howard's hit comedy "Night Shift," starring Henry Winkler and Michael Keaton, and earned the lead in Kevin Reynolds' upcoming "Fandango" for Steven Spielberg's Amblin' Productions.

Costner was born in Lynwood, California and attended California State University at Fullerton as a marketing major. But shortly before graduating in 1978, he joined the Southcoast Actors' Co-op where he appeared in a number of community theatre productions. He married his college sweetheart that same year and, after a brief stint in the business world, turned all his energy toward breaking into the film industry.

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Landing a job at the Raleigh Studios as a stage manager, Costner continued to pursue his acting career, studying with actors' workshops and private coaches in Los Angeles. He ultimately landed a starring role in a low budget feature distributed by New World Pictures, "Stacy's Knights."

Costner and his wife Cindy live in Los Angeles and have recently become the parents of a baby girl.

DAVID GRANT plays David Sommers, a free-wheeling 20 year-old at a crossroads in his life. He is reunited with his older brother who becomes a source of guidance and strength as they take on the challenge of the most grueling and dangerous bicycle race in the country.

A native of Westport, Connecticut, Grant began acting as a sophomore in high school. He continued performing in regional theatre and studying at Connecticut College before entering the Yale School of Drama. As part of the Yale Repertory Company, Grant appeared in a variety of classic and contemporary plays including "The Ghost Sonata," "Julius Caesar" and "Tom Jones."

Grant moved to New York where he earned roles in several Off-Broadway productions. He later won a starring role on Broadway in "The Survivor" and co-starred with Richard Gere in "Bent."

Grant made his feature film debut starring in the 1979 comedy "French Postcards," directed by Willard Huyck. The film also starred Marie-France Pisier and Debra Winger. The following year he appeared opposite Charlton Heston and

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"AMERICAN FLYERS" - Production Information -11-

Susannah York in the occult thriller "The Awakening" and co-starred with Rita Moreno and Madeline Kahn in Richard Benner's "Happy Birthday Gemini," adapted from the long-running Broadway play "Gemini" by Albert Innaurato.

On television, Grant has appeared in several movies-of-the-week including the Emmy Award winner "Kent State."

Grant currently resides in New York. His parents, both of whom are physicians, maintain the family home in nearby Connecticut.

RAE DAWN CHONG plays Marcus' part-Apache girlfriend, Sarah, whose deep commitment sustains him at a time when he most needs her loving support.

Chong, the daughter of comedian Tommy ("Cheech and...") Chong, has an ethnic heritage that includes American Indian, Black, Chinese and French ancestry. Her body of film work is nearly as diverse as her genealogy.

A professional actress since the age of twelve, when she had a supporting role in the Disney TV movie "The Whiz Kid of Riverton," Chong's big break came with the film "Quest for Fire." Produced over a period of nearly two years, the saga of civilized man's theoretical origins brought her to the attention of "American Flyers" director John Badham -- despite the fact that she spent the entire picture covered head to toe in body paint.

In the two and a half years following the release of that critically acclaimed picture, Chong has been working non-stop.

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"AMERICAN FLYERS" - Production Information -12-

A guest-starring role on the TV series "St. Elsewhere," in which she played a prostitute, earned her a major part in Bruce Cohn Curtis' recently completed "Fear City," co-starring Tom Berenger and Billy Dee Williams.

Featured parts in three other movies came in rapid succession. She starred in Alan Rudolph's upcoming "Choose Me" and appeared in the soon-to-be-released futuristic fantasy "City Limits" opposite James Earl Jones and Robby Benson. She was also recently seen in the break dancing musical "Beat Street," produced by David Picker and Harry Belafonte.

As the hitchhiker who meets David Sommers while standing in line for a hamburger, vegetarian ALEXANDRA PAUL might be said to be playing "against type" in "American Flyers."

The svelte former fashion model did a similarly uncharacteristic portrayal recently as an overweight aspiring actress in the CBS telefeature "Getting Physical."

Ms. Paul co-starred in John Carpenter's screen translation of the Stephen King thriller "Christine" and will be featured in the upcoming MGM/UA release "I Won't Dance." She made her professional acting debut in the ABC telefilm "Paper Dolls."

Veteran actress JANICE RULE stars as Mrs. Sommers, a loving mother whose personal fears have caused her to become estranged from her eldest son and overprotective of her youngest.

A film star for over thirty years, Rule has appeared in such memorable pictures as "Bell, Book and Candle," "The Subterraneans," "Invitation to a Gunfighter," "The Ambushers," "Welcome to Hard Times" and "Gumshoe." Among her more recent

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"AMERICAN FLYERS" - Production Information -13-

credits are Robert Altman's "Three Women" and Costa Gavras' suspenseful "Missing" with Jack Lemmon and Sissy Spacek.

Rule has limited her involvement in acting in recent years to devote more time to her career as a psychoanalyst. She holds a Ph.D. in research psychoanalysis from the Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute.

JOHN AMOS co-stars as health and fitness researcher Dr. Conrad, supervisor of the institute in which Marcus works, who helps the two brothers prepare for the tortuous bicycle race.

Best known for his role as Kunta Kinte, the African chieftain who inspired Alex Haley to trace his lineage in "Roots," Amos most recently starred in the action-adventure "The Beastmaster."

Among Amos' other motion picture credits are Melvin Van Peebles' "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song," "Vanishing Point," Disney's "The World's Greatest Athlete" and "Let's Do It Again," directed by Sidney Poitier.

About the Filmmakers...

With "American Flyers," director JOHN BADHAM continues to demonstrate his diverse storytelling skills.

The summer of 1983 brought Badham to the forefront of the film world with the release of two of the season's biggest hits, "Blue Thunder," starring Roy Scheider, and "WarGames," with Matthew Broderick.

These two high-tech adventures led many who were unfamiliar with the director's work to associate him with the

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action genre. Two years prior, however, Badham was receiving recognition for his sensitive interpretation of a pair of Broadway plays. "Whose Life Is It Anyway?," which starred Richard Dreyfuss, and the stylized 1979 production of "Dracula," with Frank Langella and Laurence Oliver, earned the young director much praise for his vividly realized characters.

In 1977, with only his second feature film, Badham established himself as one of the industry's fastest rising talents as he directed a then little-known John Travolta in "Saturday Night Fever." The story of a street kid who finds dignity and self-expression on the dance floor was one of the year's biggest box office successes. It also drew critical acclaim for capturing the spirit of '70s youth in much the same way that such landmark films as "Easy Rider," "The Graduate" and "American Graffiti" reflected the lives and longings of another generation.

Badham made his feature film directorial debut the previous year chronicling the hardball heroics of "The Bingo Long Traveling All-Star and Motor Kings." The comedy about comraderie among a group of baseball players barnstorming in the old Negro Leagues starred James Earl Jones, Billy Dee Williams and Richard Pryor.

Born in England, the son of actress Mary Hewitt and an American army general, Badham returned to the United States when his father was transferred to Alabama where he and his sister Mary spent much of their childhood. At the age of ten, Mary became the first of the two siblings to break

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into the movie business. She received a 1962 Oscar nomination for her portrayal of Scout Finch, the young protagonist in "To Kill a Mockingbird," Gregory Peck's Academy Award winning effort.

Badham attended Yale as a philosophy major but a few seasons of summer stock convinced him that his future was in the theatre. Upon graduation, he entered the Yale School of Drama, earning another degree while gaining valuable experience directing the classics.

Inspired by his sister's success in film, Badham moved to Los Angeles where he landed a job in the mailroom at Universal Studios. He worked his way up to casting, then cutting trailers and finally to directing television.

Among the series episodes he directed were "The Senator" (which brought him an Emmy nomination), "Night Gallery," "Kung Fu" and "The Streets of San Francisco." His telefeatures during that period include: "Isn't It Shocking?," a black comedy starring Alan Alda, Ruth Gordon and Louise Lasser, and "Reflections of Murder," (based on the 1955 classic "Diabolique") with Tuesday Weld, Joan Hackett and Sam Waterston. He won his second Emmy nomination for the Emmy Award winning crime drama "The Law," starring Judd Hirsch.

Producer GARETH WIGAN, along with his partner and long-time associate Paula Weinstein, makes "American Flyers" the premier offering of his newly formed W.W. Productions company.

Born and raised in London, England, and graduated with honors from Oxford University, Wigan began his film career as

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"AMERICAN FLYERS" - Production Information -16-

a theatrical agent with MCA in London. He later formed his own agency in London and New York with Richard Gregson.

In the late 1960s, Wigan divided his time between producing films in the U.K. and operating a record company in Los Angeles and London with Alan Livingston.

Moving to Los Angeles in 1974, he joined 20th Century Fox the following year to work with Alan Ladd, Jr. and Jay Kanter. He remained at Fox as a production executive for four years. He was also involved in many aspects of distribution and marketing. During his tenure with the studio he supervised the production of such films as "Silver Streak," "Turning Point," "An Unmarried Woman," "Alien," and "Breaking Away" written by Steve Tesich.

In 1979, Wigan left Fox to enter into a partnership with Ladd, Kanter and others under the banner of The Ladd Company. Among the films he had a hand in bringing to the screen were "Outland," "Lovesick" and "The Right Stuff."

Wigan left The Ladd Company in October 1983 to form W.W. Productions with former Fox associate Weinstein.

Producer PAULA WEINSTEIN has been associated with Gareth Wigan, her partner in W.W. Productions, since both were vice presidents at 20th Century Fox. Their association continued when Weinstein became a vice president of The Ladd Company in 1980.

Prior to forming her current independent production company, Weinstein was the highest ranking woman executive in the film industry, performing the duties of president of

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United Artists Pictures.

The daughter of motion picture and television producer Hannah Weinstein was raised, along with her two sisters, in Paris and London when her mother left the country to avoid persecution by the infamous Joe McCarthy Hollywood investigations of the early 1950s.

Weinstein later attended Columbia University, leaving school in the mid-1960s to become a political organizer for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam.

She began her career in the film industry as a publicist, then became a film editor and later an agent with William Morris. She soon earned a position as one of the industry's youngest production vice presidents at Warner Bros. She subsequently became senior vice president of worldwide production at Fox and vice president of production at The Ladd Company before being named president of the newly formed feature film division of United Artists in 1981.

Academy Award winning screenwriter STEVE TESICH returns to film after spending the past two years writing for the stage.

In 1982, Tesich had accomplished a literary coup by adapting John Irving's monumental novel "The World According to Garp" for the screen. The film, under the direction of George Roy Hill and starring Robin Williams in the title role, managed what few adaptations ever realize: sustaining the spirit of the written work on celluloid.

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"AMERICAN FLYERS" - Production Information -18-

Prior to "Garp," Tesich created the original screenplay for the suspenseful "Eyewitness" which starred William Hurt and Sigourney Weaver. He also wrote "Four Friends," a semi-autobiographical tale starring Craig Wasson.

Tesich won his Oscar for his first produced screenplay, "Breaking Away," directed by his good friend Peter Yates (who also directed "Eyewitness").

Born in Titovo Uzice, Yugoslavia, Tesich entered the United States at age 13 and settled with his family in East Chicago, Indiana. He entered Indiana University on a wrestling scholarship and graduated in 1965.

His first professionally produced play was "The Carpenters," staged at the American Place Theatre in Manhattan in 1970. He has subsequently had several other plays produced at that playhouse. His comedy about the inadvertant reunion of a group of 1960s radicals, "Division Street," marked his Broadway debut in 1980.

Tesich currently lives in Colorado with his wife Becky.

Associate producer GREGG CHAMPION served in the same capacity for director John Badham on last summer's action-adventure "Blue Thunder." He was previously production associate on Badham's "Whose Life Is It Anyway?"

A 1978 graduate of the University of Southern California Film School, Champion was born in Los Angeles and raised in Los Angeles and New York.

Champion began his career as an assistant on the 1974 feature "Bank Shot" which starred George C. Scott and was

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"AMERICAN FLYERS" - Production Information -19-

directed by Gower Champion. He later served in various capacities on such films as Blake Edwards' "Revenge of the Pink Panther" and Nicholas Roeg's "The Man Who Fell to Earth," starring David Bowie.

Director of photography DONALD PETERMAN is a veteran motion picture and commercial cinematographer who, received a great deal of attention for his camera work on last year's "Flashdance."

Among Peterman's other feature credits are Robert Mulligan's "Kiss Me Goodbye," Garry Marshall's big screen directorial debut "Young Doctors In Love," George Cukor's "Rich and Famous" and the suspense thriller "When a Stranger Calls."

Peterman's son Keith is serving as camera operator on "American Flyers." Peterman has since shot the Zanuck/Brown Production "Cocoon" for director Ron Howard.

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"AMERICAN FLYERS"

Black and White Captions

MINI KIT

- 103-29 (L-R, Foreground) ALEXANDRA PAUL, RAE DAWN CHONG and KEVIN COSTNER cheer on the leaders in a grueling cross-country bicycle race through the Colorado Rockies in the new film "American Flyers," forthcoming this summer from Warner Bros.
- 103-50 RAE DAWN CHONG and ALEXANDRA PAUL (foreground, seated) are joined (background, standing) by KEVIN COSTNER, LUCA BERCOVICI, DAVID GRANT and ROBERT TOWNSEND as participants and supporters in a rugged cross-country bicycle race in the new film "American Flyers," forth coming this summer from Warner Bros.
- 103-102 KEVIN COSTNER (left) and DAVID GRANT portray brothers who renew their relationship while training for the rugged cross-country bike race known as "Hell of the West" in the new Warner Bros. release "American Flyers," due out this summer.