



# HORSEMANSHIP

Assessment

LEVELS 4 to 7



CANADA  
4-H Alberta

## The 4-H Motto

**“Learn To Do By Doing”**

## The 4-H Pledge

I pledge:

My **head** to clearer thinking,

My **heart** to greater loyalty,

My **hands** to larger service,

My **health** to better living,

For my club, my community,

my country, and my world.

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# HORSEMANSHIP ASSESSMENT: INTRODUCTION

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The assessment tools you are about to work through with your leader will give you a better idea of where you are needing to work with your horse for the project year. Regardless of your age and experience, you should work through these tools from the start. New members and experienced riders alike should make certain that all the skills listed have been mastered.

The levels have been set up to ensure safety for the horse and rider and to build a strong foundation for your future in riding, wherever it may take you. One of the project goals is to ensure riders are safe and effective in groundwork and riding skills as well as knowledge of their horse and equipment used. Your love for horses and the skills you gain through your project work will be of great benefit to you for your whole life.

## **How to use your Assessment Checklists**

Keep your checklists up-to-date. Review each level with your leader to determine which skills you have already mastered and highlight the ones you are working on. Keep going back and reviewing the lists. This will be a useful tool to move you to the next level of Horsemanship. Happy riding!



## LEVEL FOUR: **DISMOUNTED SKILLS**

- Explain why a horse would need shoes and how you would recognize that it is time for a reset.
- Explain three safety rules you will apply when bandaging your horses leg. Demonstrate how to correctly apply leg bandages for first aid.
- Explain three types of leg protection and their purpose.
- Show a First Aid kit and explain first aid principles.
- Explain your spring immunization program and what diseases it guards against.
- Explain at least two forms that dewormers come in and how to give them.
- Identify the five basic nutrients required by horse and how they get them.
- Name ten desirable conformation features.
- Identify three of the most desirable conformation features of your horse and describe any desirable breed characteristics that your horse shows.
- Using a string or stick, explain the horses balance or symmetry.
- Explain three safety rules to remember while lunging.
- How can you tell that a horse is paying attention to you? How does he show that he understands what you are asking?
- Describe the signs you might see in lunging if your horse was going to disobediently stop, turn in or bolt.
- Explain and demonstrate how to safely lunge your horse at the walk, jog/trot, halt and reverse (go both directions). Explain the purpose of lunging and where you would do it.

- Demonstrate at the halter a turn on the haunch in both directions to prepare for a mounted turn.
- Make and demonstrate a horse-handling pattern (showmanship) - walk trot, turn right, squaring and posing and backing up (left turn is not usually required in showmanship).
- Watch a lame horse and explain how you can tell which leg is sore.
- Watch a ridden horse doing a shoulder in from a rear point of view - explain when the horse's legs are in the correct positions.
- List five things that you would check on your horse trailer to see that it meets safety standards.
- Instruct an older member or adult how to safely load and unload a quiet horse into a trailer.
- Identify three parts of the bridle that should be checked to assure proper fit.
- Identify three parts of the saddle that should be checked to assure proper fit.
- Explain how and when you would advance your horse from a snaffle to a leverage bit.

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*Evaluator's signature*

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*Date*

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## LEVEL FOUR: MOUNTED SKILLS

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**To assess the rider levels:** Before you can assess, we must make sure that we are using a progressive format in lesson planning. That means the riding instructor should include a warm-up with each lesson and a review of previously taught skills so both rider and horse can progress. At every skill taught, we need to reinforce basic position, balance, suppleness, focus, timing and appropriate aids. We suggest that the individual skills be assessed first and only those who are successful at these skills be invited to ride the pattern. At all rider levels, the skills may be performed with two hands on the reins unless there is a reference to neck reining. Our preference would be that snaffle bits be used, but because safety is our number one concern, any humane bit may be used or refer to the standard set by your regional committee. To help the riders with pattern accuracy, please place  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  markers down the sides of the riding area and one at the middle of each end.

- Review** all rein effects – **open, direct, indirect, support, neck rein and rein of opposition.** (English riders may leave out neck rein.)
  
- Warm-up: flexion** – using an **open** or **direct** rein, flex at 11, 10, 9, 1, 2, 3 and 12 o'clock at the walk and jog/trot, both left and right. Include **rein of opposition** and **reverse arc bend.** Attention will be given to the correct use of your **leg aids.**
  
- Starting in the center of the arena at X, ride a small **circle** at a sitting jog/trot and a larger faster circle at a rising trot in both directions. All circles start and end at X. The horse must be in the correct **bend** and show a shortening or lengthening of **stride** between jog/sit trot and rise trot. The rider should have **rhythm. Diagonals** required.
  
- Demonstrate a **lengthened/extended jog/trot** – Western sitting or rising, English rising.
  
- Show how to **change diagonals** at the trot by riding a three loop **serpentine** (using markers) – go in both directions. Credit will be given to those riders who sit several strides to feel for the new diagonal rather than just guess.
  
- For Western – Explain and demonstrate correct one-handed **neck reining** techniques by turning at least three times in each direction at arena markers set up in a square. Do at all three gaits. Riders must tell the evaluator if the horse's nose is tipped correctly at each turn.

- Explain and demonstrate the correct use of the **rein of opposition** both in front of and behind the withers. In a twenty meter square, demonstrate how to use a rein of opposition behind the withers to help the horse corner correctly or leg yield. What effect does moving your hand from in front to behind the withers have?
- Using specific markers as **transition** points, move from a **walk** to a **lope/canter** on the correct lead, then back to a walk. Do at least twice in each direction of the ring. There should be no more than 2 jog/trot steps in the transition.
- Walk, jog/trot and lope/canter a large **circle** in each direction without markers. The horse should have **bend**, some **flexion** at 12 o'clock (vertical) and the **correct lead**.
- Jog/sit trot at least 10 steps, **stop** correctly, and **back** fluidly for at least 6 strides. What should you do if: a) your horse backs crooked, b) your horse becomes resistant?
- What is **collection**? Demonstrate how to effectively use your body to drive your horse's hind legs up underneath him at the walk and jog/trot into supporting hands that will create first lateral (11 or 1 o'clock), then vertical (12 o'clock) flexion and collection for at least 3 strides.
- What is a **half halt** or a **momentary check**? Explain and demonstrate how a half halt or momentary check can improve collection.
- Without using the wall, demonstrate a) a **turn on the forehand** right and left with 4 crossovers of the hind legs, and b) a **turn on the forehand** right and left with 2 crossovers of the hind legs where the horse's **spine is straight** (intermediate stage).
- Demonstrate a **leg yield** at a walk off the center line toward the wall
  - a) showing horse **bent around the rider's active leg** with at least 4 crossovers in each direction, and
  - b) with a **straight spine** doing 2 crossovers in each direction.
- Explain and demonstrate the **sidepass** that includes at least three crossovers in each direction.

- Explain and demonstrate one to two steps of the **advanced turn on the forehand** by having the horse walk a circle with the correct bend. Halt, and while keeping the horse in bend, the rider uses the outside leg to push the horse's hips to the inside at least 1 step. Remember that excessive contact on the inside rein will make it very difficult for the horse to move his hip. The evaluator will watch to see that both reins are about 50 per cent active.
- What is a **turn on the haunches**? What are 2 lead up exercises to the turn on the haunches? Explain and demonstrate a turn on the haunches showing at least two crossovers in each direction (outside must cross in front of inside).
- Explain and demonstrate a **simple lead change** in a **figure 8**. Both circles must be of equal size, must touch at X (middle of arena) and have equal jog/trot steps on each side of X. Extra credit will be given to those who change bend before picking up new lead.
- Western - Demonstrate **neck reining** control individually and in a group on the rail. Credit will be given to riders who keep their shoulders square and do not lean into reining hand. The rein must be held correctly. English – same exercise with 2 direct reins. Both Western and English riders should demonstrate correct 2 beat and 3 beat rhythm.
- Ride the attached **pattern**. Include **tack check, mount and dismount**. May be ridden 1 or 2 handed.

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*Evaluator's signature*

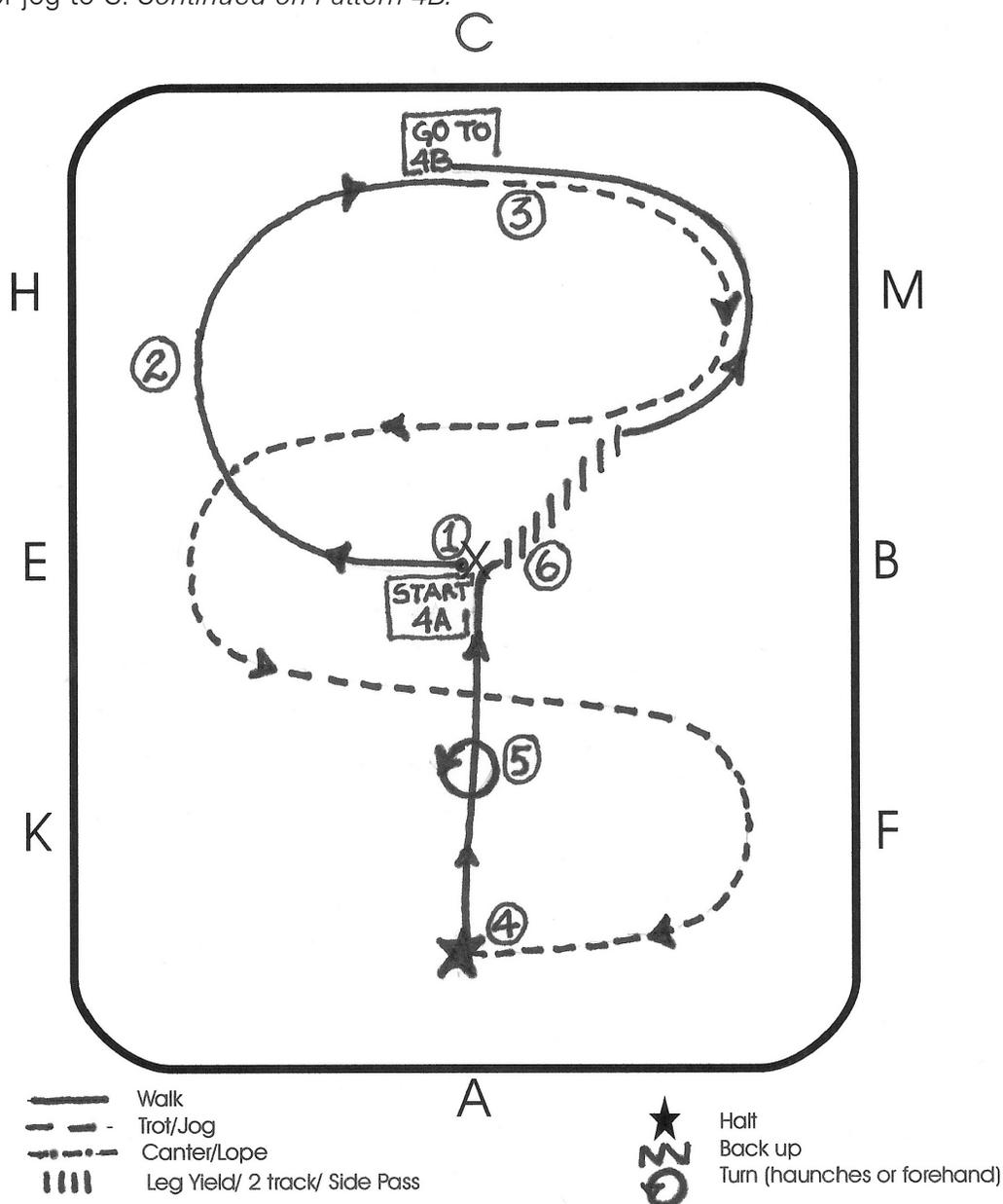
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*Date*

## LEVEL FOUR: PATTERN 4A

This pattern is broken down into four parts for easier reading, but is intended to be read as one pattern for evaluation. Rider may have a reader for all patterns. All long patterns are intended to be ridden with two hands regardless of bit type.

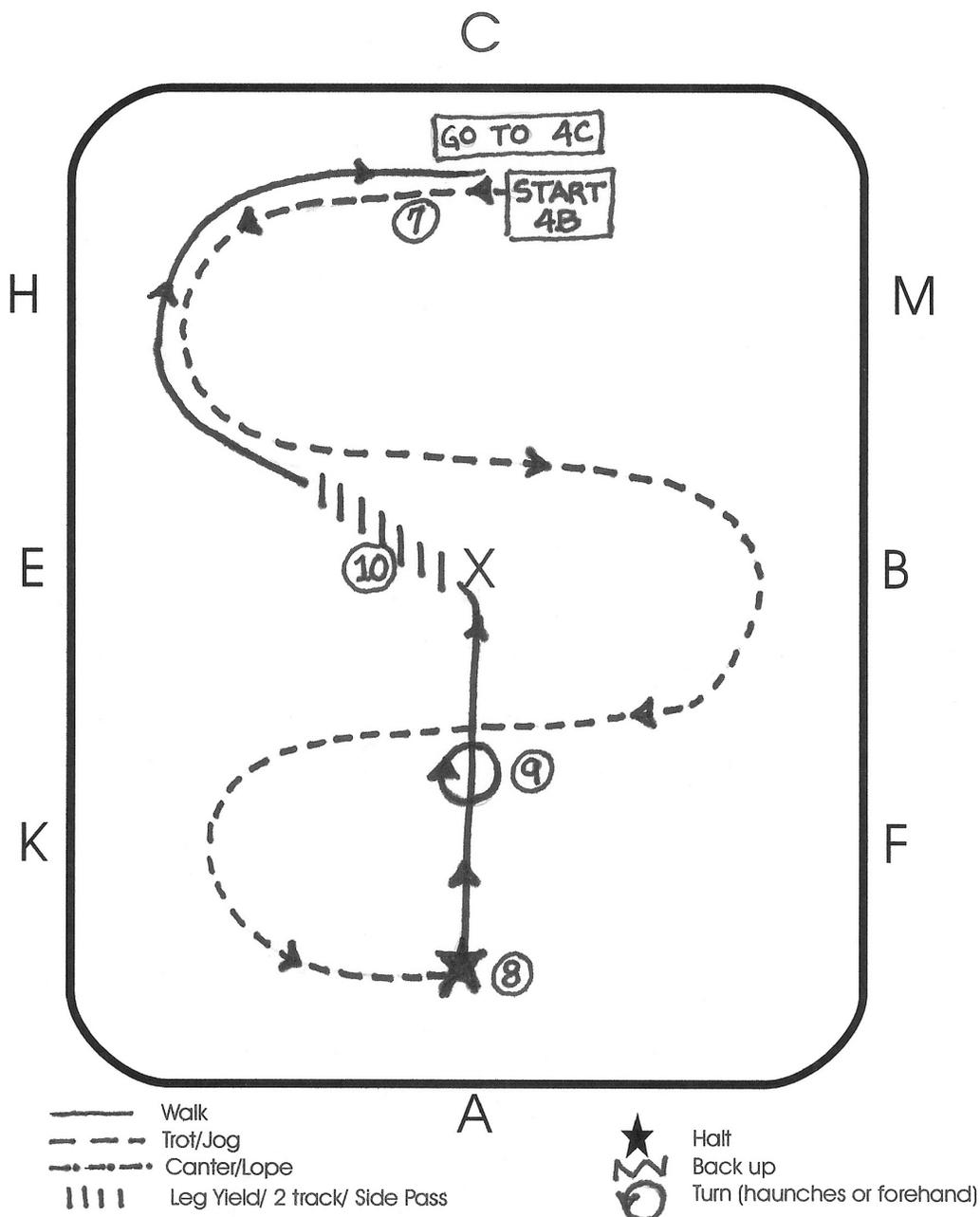
1. Mount correctly at X facing E.
2. Walk a half circle clockwise X-H-C.
3. At C, ride a three loop serpentine at the rising trot showing diagonal changes each time the A-C line is crossed.
4. Stop at A. Turn right 90° on haunches.
5. Walk half way to X. Do a 180° turn on the forehand with the rider using the left leg aid. Hesitate, repeat a 180° turn on the forehand in the same direction. Continue walking to X.
6. At X, leg yield and do 4 to 6 crossovers toward M. Walk to M and sit trot or jog to C. Continued on Pattern 4B.



# LEVEL FOUR: **PATTERN 4B**

Rider may have a reader for all patterns.

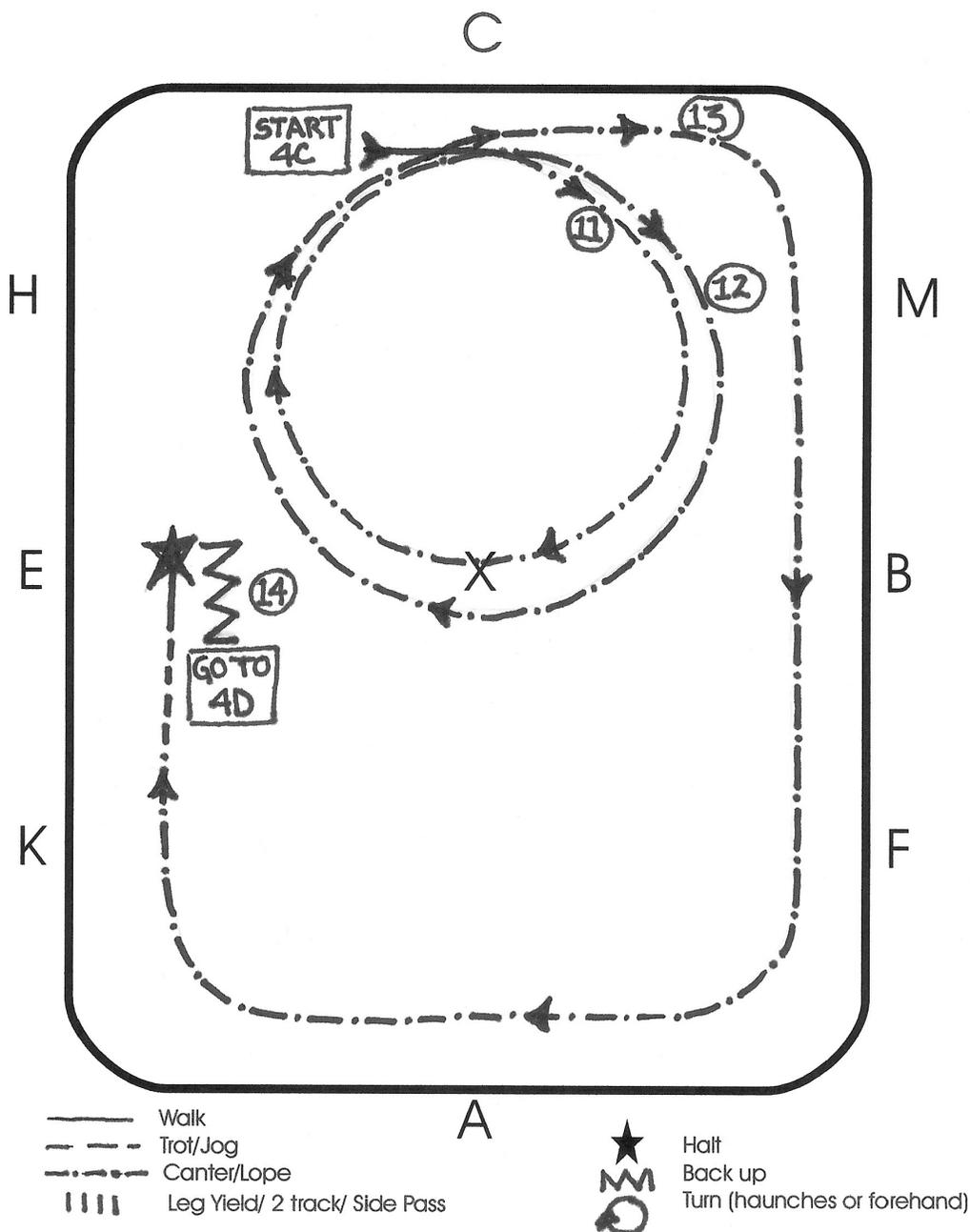
7. At C, ride a three loop serpentine at the rising trot showing diagonal changes each time the A-C line is crossed.
  8. Halt at A. Turn left 90° on haunches.
  9. Walk half way to X. Do a 180° turn on the forehand with the rider using the right leg aid. Hesitate, repeat a 180° turn on the forehand in the same direction. Continue walking to X.
  10. At X, leg yield and do 4 to 6 crossovers towards H. Sit trot or jog to C.
- Continue on Pattern 4C.*



# LEVEL FOUR: PATTERN 4C

Rider may have a reader for all patterns.

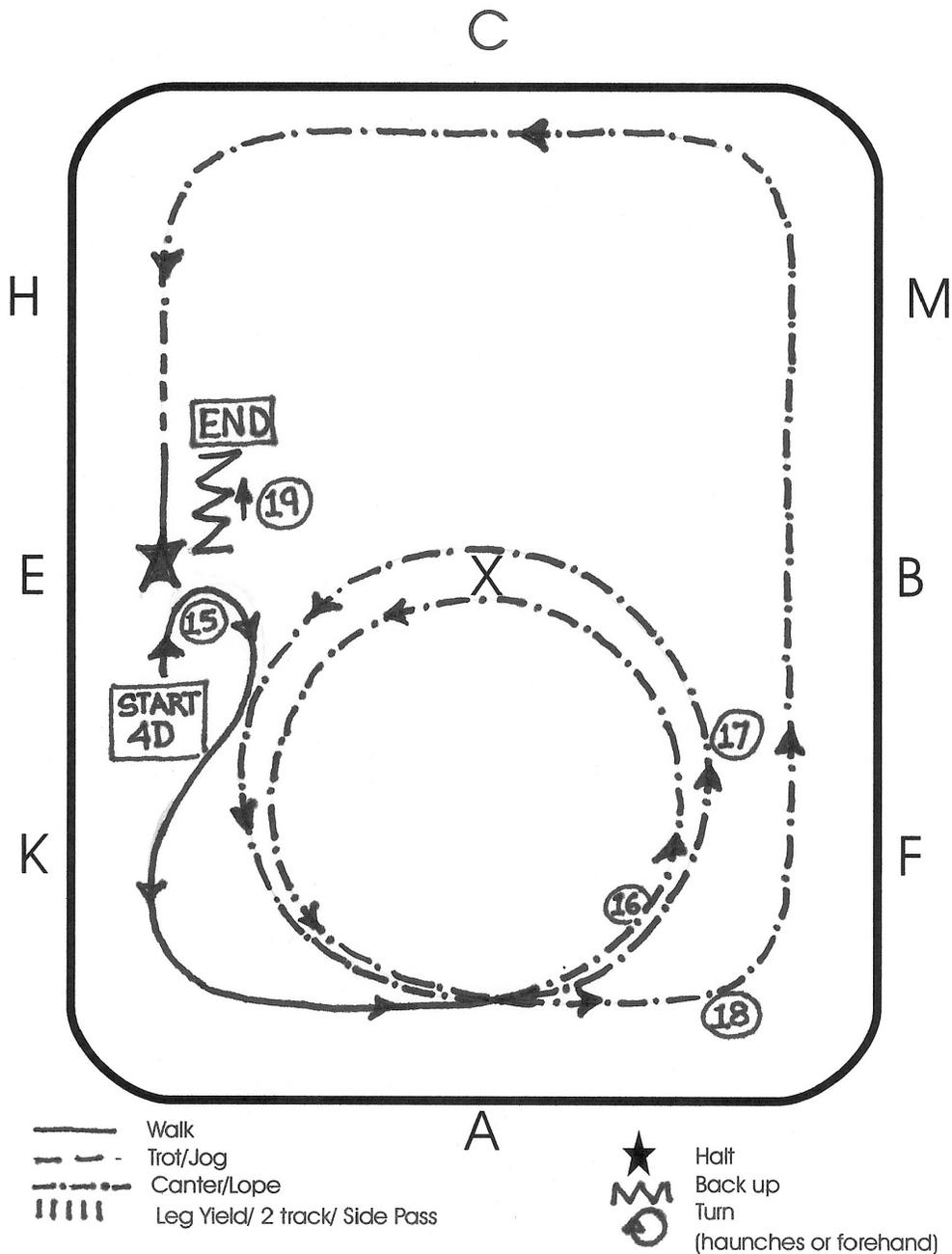
11. At C, lope/canter a smaller, slower collected circle to the right.
12. At C, lope/canter a larger, faster natural lope/canter circle to the right.
13. At C, continue lope/canter on the rail on the correct lead. Do a smooth downward transition to halt near E. A smooth transition will include no more than 3 jog/trot and/or 3 walk steps.
14. Back up at least 8 steps. *Continue on Pattern 4D.*



# LEVEL FOUR: **PATTERN 4D**

Rider may have a reader for all patterns.

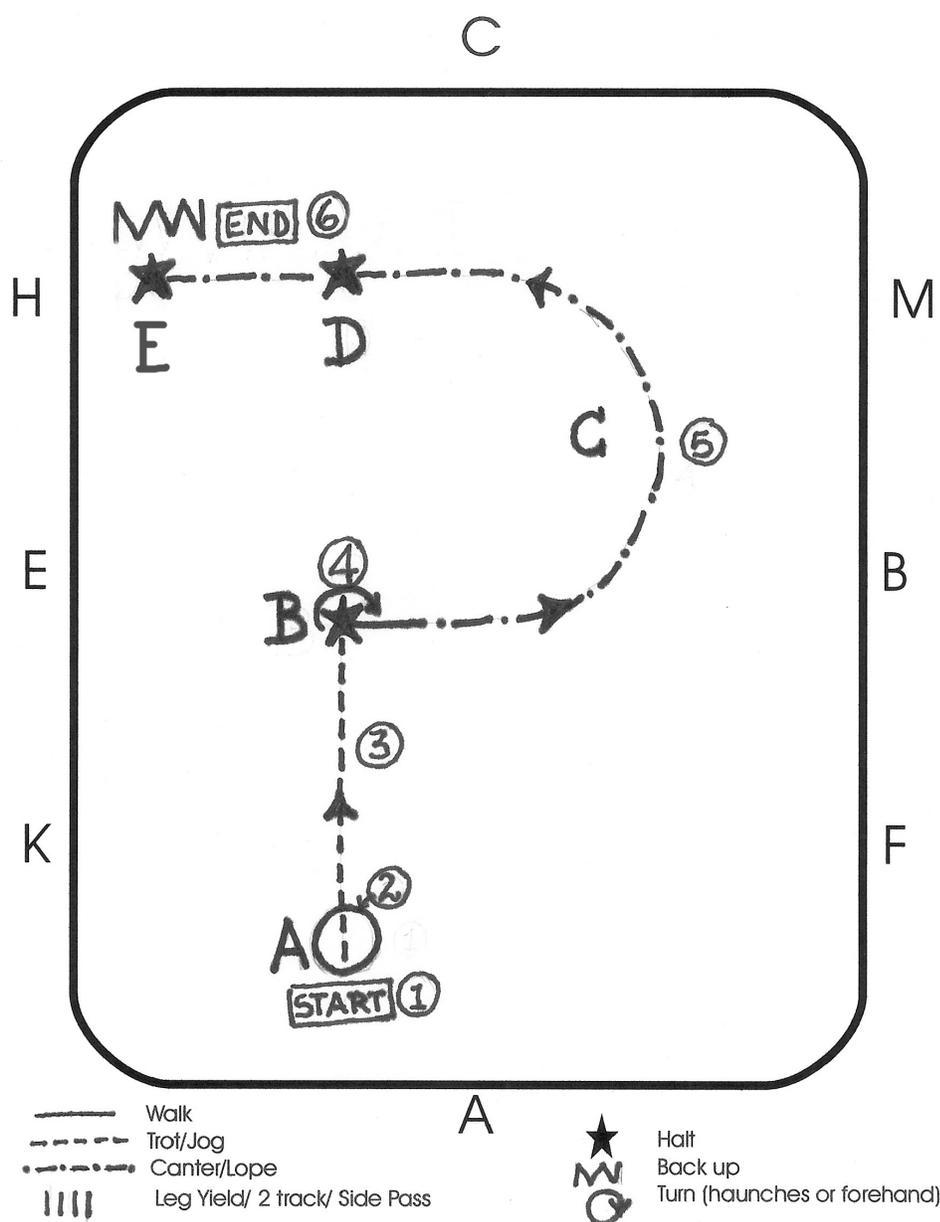
15. Walk forward to E, reverse and walk back to A.
16. At A, lope/cantern a smaller, slower collected circle to the left.
17. At A, lope/cantern a larger, faster natural lope/cantern circle to the left.
18. At A, continue lope/cantern on the rail on the correct lead. Do a smooth downward transition to a halt near E. A smooth transition will include no more than 3 job/trot and/or 3 walk steps.
19. Back up at least 8 steps. Dismount correctly and lead out. *End of Pattern*



## LEVEL FOUR: SHORT PATTERN

Rider may have a reader for all patterns. Short patterns should be ridden with **ONE** hand (Western). This pattern uses pylons for markers.

1. Stand at A with back to B.
2. Do a 180° turn on the forehand (right or left).
3. Jog/trot from A to B. Halt.
4. At B, do a 90° turn on the haunches to right.
5. Walk into a lope/canter. Lope/canter on the correct lead around C to D.
6. Walk at D. Halt at E and back up at least 8 steps.



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## LEVEL FIVE: **DISMOUNTED SKILLS**

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- Describe three types of horseshoes and their purpose.
- Describe three supplements and explain why a horse might need them.
- Explain how to treat an open bleeding wound.
- Identify three diseases common to your area and their symptoms, treatment or prevention.
- Give three reasons and symptoms why your horse may need to visit the horse dentist.
- Explain how a horse's vision differs from ours.
- Define unsoundness, blemishes and faulty conformation. Identify one or two of these your horse may have.
- Explain and locate the sites of three blemishes, three unsoundness and six faulty conformation factors that you could check for when buying a horse.
- Watch a horse being moved directly toward and away from you and identify any faulty actions you may see.
- Evaluate the conformation of a horse using oral reasons.
- Name five important factors to take into account when purchasing a horse.
- Watch a lame horse move and identify four reasons where and why he may be lame. Explain indicators which lead you to your conclusion.
- Watch a horse doing a haunches in from a rear point of view - explain when the horse's legs are in the correct positions.
- Demonstrate safe lunging at all three gaits in both directions.
- Explain three safety rules to remember while ground driving.

- Describe the purpose of ground driving and demonstrate it in a safe place at a walk and jog/trot in both a straight line and a circle, halt and back up.
- Name three pieces of protective equipment and their purpose that you could use on your horse when he is riding in a trailer.
- Explain and demonstrate one safe loading and unloading technique with your horse. Give four reasons why he might not want to go into a trailer.

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*Evaluator's signature*

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*Date*

## LEVEL FIVE: MOUNTED SKILLS

**To assess the rider levels:** Before you can assess, we must make sure that we are using a progressive format in lesson planning. That means the riding instructor should include a warm-up with each lesson and a review of previously taught skills so both rider and horse can progress. At every skill taught, we need to reinforce basic position, balance, suppleness, focus, timing and appropriate aids. We suggest that the individual skills be assessed first and only those who are successful at these skills be invited to ride the pattern. At all rider levels, the skills may be performed with two hands on the reins unless there is a reference to neck reining. Our preference would be that snaffle bits be used, but because safety is our number one concern, any humane bit may be used or refer to the standard set by your regional committee. To help the riders with pattern accuracy, please place  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  markers down the sides of the riding area and one at the middle of each end.

- Flexion warm-up** – at all 3 gaits using **open, direct, support and rein of opposition** rein effects. All rein effects must be used, but not at all 3 gaits. By now, your warm-up should be smooth and flowing.
- Drop stirrups and ride with a proper **basic position, balance, suppleness, focus and educated hands** at a walk, jog/trot and lope/canter around the arena in both directions.
- What is a **shoulder-in**? Explain the aids and demonstrate at least 3 strides of shoulder-in in each direction. It may be done at the walk or jog/trot.
- a) How could **collection** help you and your horse? b) Demonstrate how to drive your horse's hind legs up underneath him into supporting hands at all three gaits to create collection for at least 6 strides. c) Use a **half halt** or **momentary check** to drive the horse's hind legs up underneath him and lighten his forequarters.
- Demonstrate **leg yield** of at least 6 crossovers at a jog/trot with the horse's **spine straight (intermediate stage)**.
- Explain and demonstrate a **sidepass** of at least six fluid crossovers in each direction. The horse's **spine** should be **straight (intermediate stage)**.
- Starting at X, a) lope/canter two **figure 8's**, first one is smaller than the second – all **simple lead changes** take place at X, b) lope/canter a variation of the **figure 8** pattern which will include at least 3 circles of varying speeds on each side of X before changing leads at X. Lope/canter first a smaller, slower collected **circle**, followed by

a larger, faster circle, followed by a slower, smaller, collected circle all on the same side of X. Then do a **simple lead change** at X and repeat in the other direction. Speed variation is essential. There should be equal jog/trot steps on each side of X. Correct bend is important.

- Demonstrate four **straight line simple lead changes** (on the diagonal lines), two right and two left. The change must be away from the corner and both horse and rider should stay on the straight line until the corner is reached (no leaning).
- Lope/canter** a three loop **serpentine** showing smooth **simple lead changes**. The trot/jog steps must be balanced on each side of the A-C line.
- Demonstrate a **turn on the forehand** right and left showing a) **intermediate stage** with 6 crossovers and b) **advanced stage** with 3 crossovers.
- What is a **haunches-in**? Explain and demonstrate at least 3 strides of haunches-in in both directions a) at a walk, and b) at a jog/sit trot.
- Demonstrate a **haunches-in walk to lope/canter transition** right and left.
- From a **lope/canter**, demonstrate a quiet balanced downward **transition** to a **halt**, hesitate, then resume the **lope/canter**. There should not be more than 3 walk or jog/trot steps in the transition.
- Demonstrate both a right and left **turn on the haunches** including at least four crossovers of the front legs. It may be done from a halt or forward motion.
- Western – Demonstrate the correct **neck reining** technique by riding a pattern consisting of a lope circle in each direction joined with a straight line simple lead change. English – same pattern ridden at a canter with two direct reins. Finish the pattern with a jog/trot or lope/canter to halt transition and fluid back up.
- Ride the attached **pattern**. Include **tack check, mount** and **dismount**. May be ridden 1 or 2 handed.

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*Evaluator's signature*

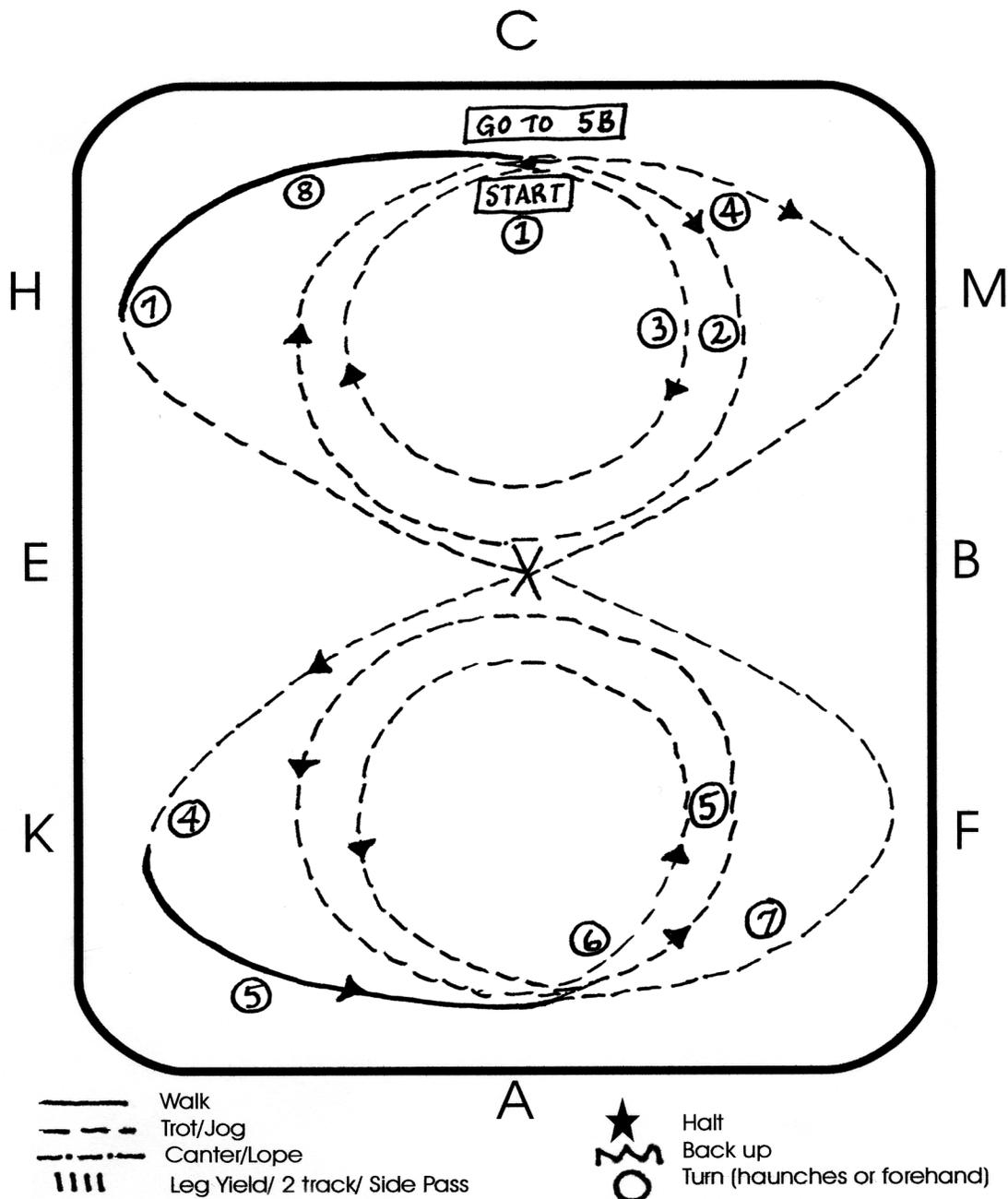
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*Date*

# LEVEL FIVE: PATTERN 5A

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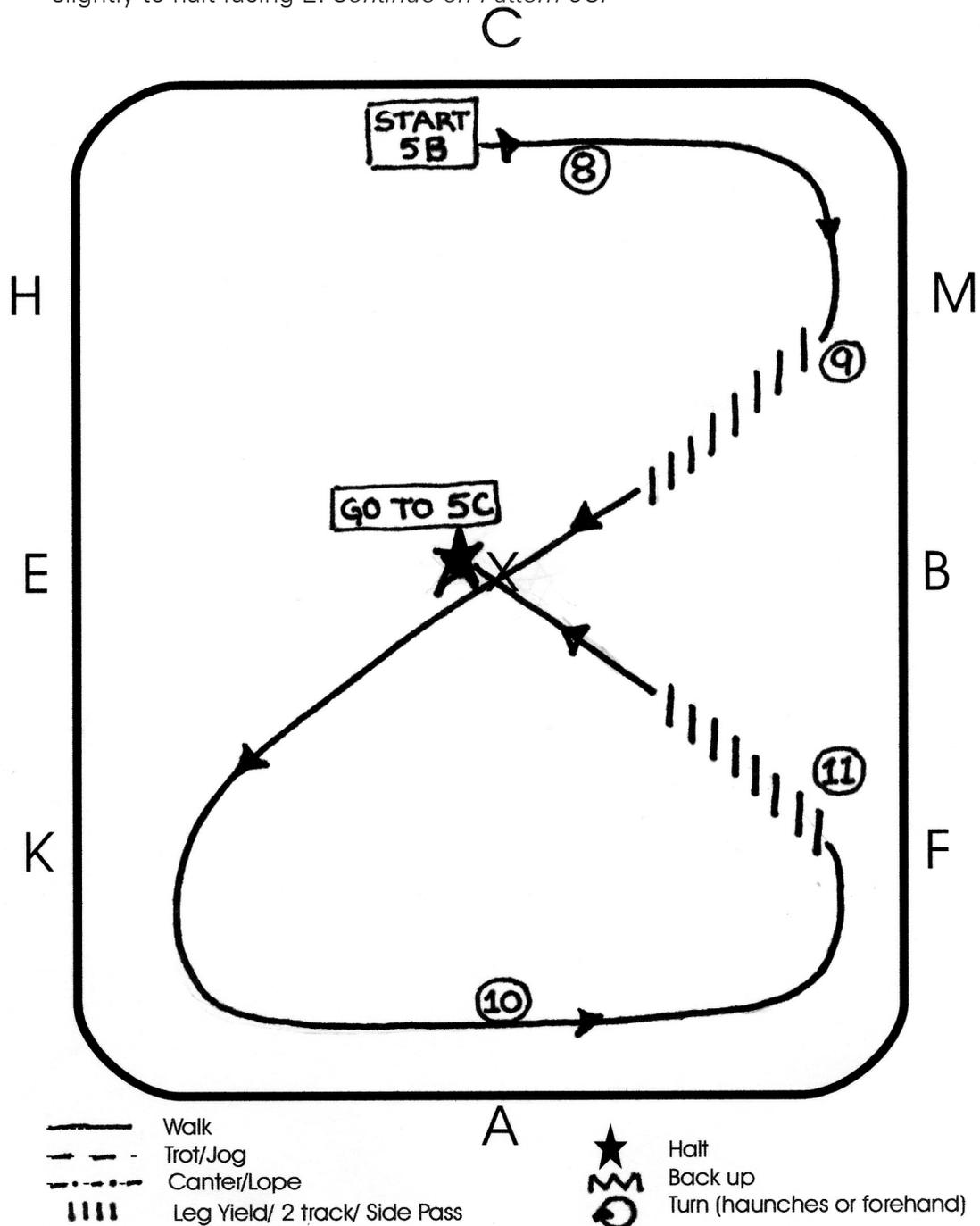
1. Correctly mount at C facing M.
2. At C, rise trot a larger, longer strided circle.
3. At C, sit trot/jog a slower, smaller circle.
4. At C, rise trot C-M-X-K changing diagonals at X.
5. Walk K to A and rise trot a larger, longer strided circle.
6. At A, sit trot/jog a slower, smaller circle.
7. At A, rise/trot A-F-X-H. Walk H to C. Continue on Pattern 5B



## LEVEL FIVE: PATTERN 5B

Rider may have a reader for all patterns.

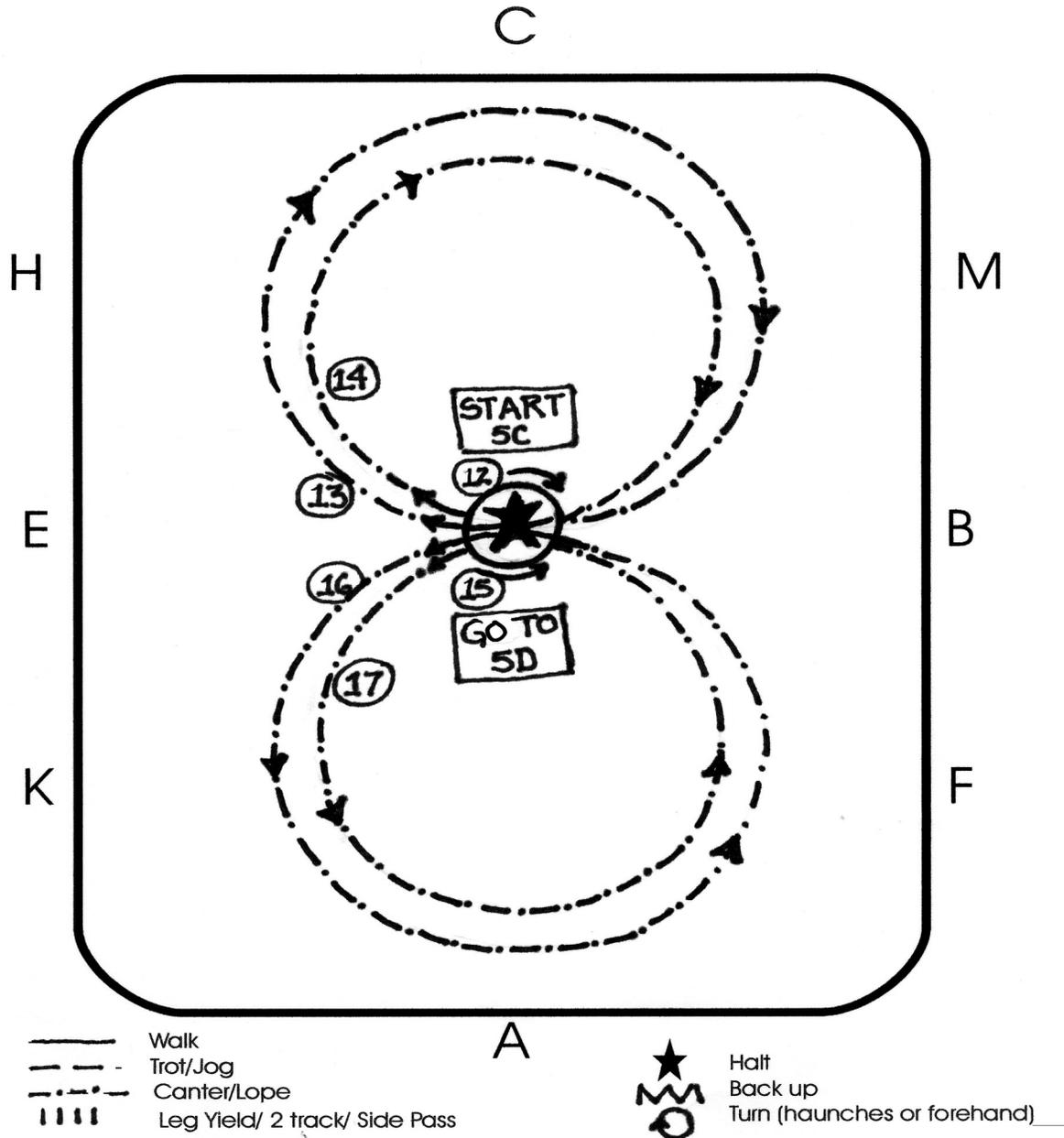
8. At C, walk to M showing at least 2 strides of shoulder in.
9. At M, walk towards X showing at least 2 strides of haunches in with rider's left leg pushing the hip. Walk X-K-A.
10. At A, walk to F showing at least 2 strides of shoulder in.
11. At F, walk toward X showing at least 2 strides of haunches in with the rider's right leg pushing the hip. Continue walking toward X and angle the horse slightly to halt facing E. *Continue on Pattern 5C.*



# LEVEL 5: PATTERN 5C

Rider may have a reader for all patterns.

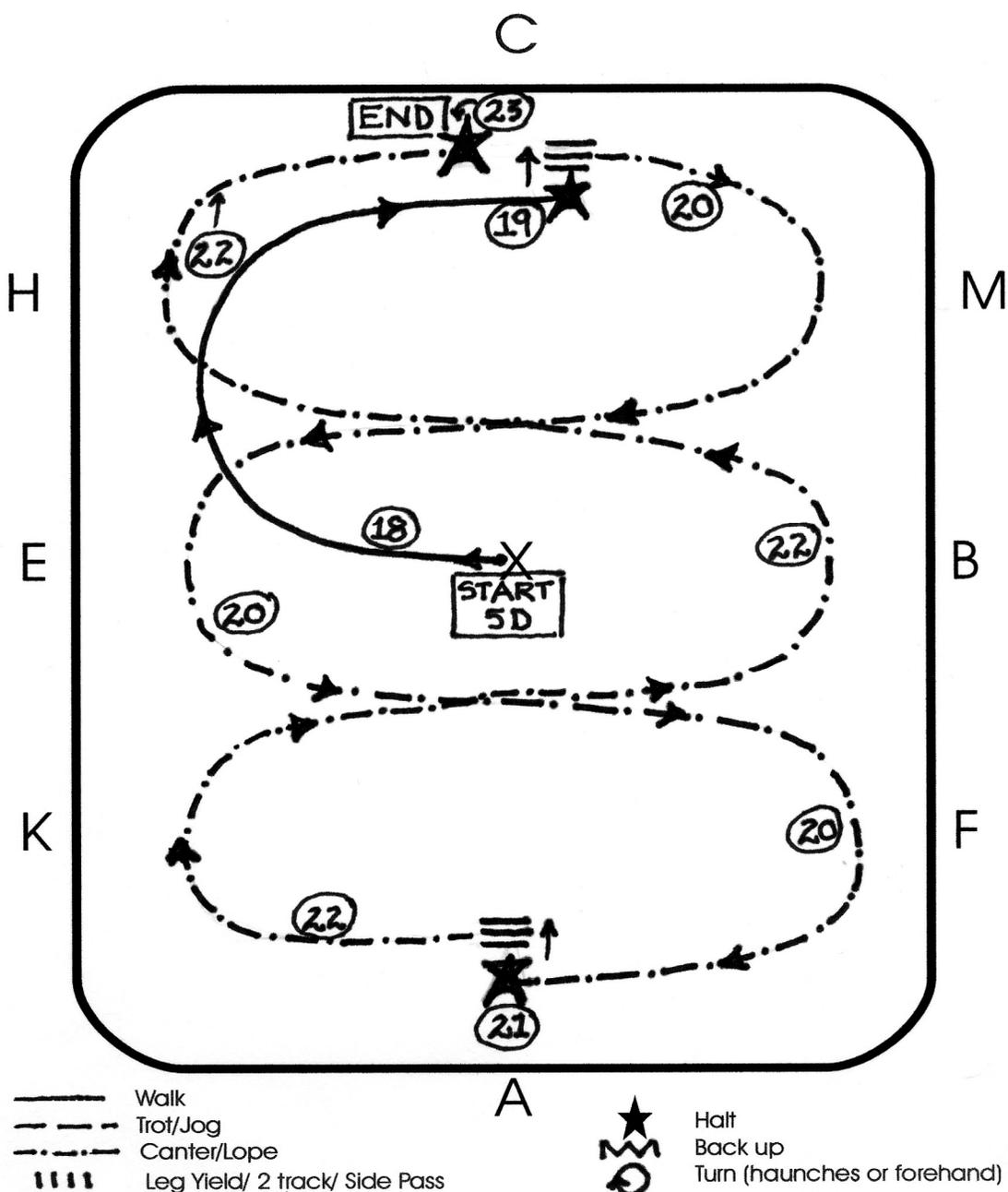
12. At X, do a 180° right turn on haunches. Hesitate, repeat in the same direction.
13. At X, lope/cantern a larger, longer strided circle to the right.
14. At X, lope/cantern one or two smaller, slower collected circles to the right. Halt at X. Hesitate.
15. At X, do a 180° left turn on haunches. Hesitate, repeat in the same direction.
16. At X, lope/cantern a larger, longer strided circle to the left.
17. At X, lope/cantern one or two smaller, slower collected circles to the left. Halt at X. *Continue on Pattern 5D.*



## LEVEL 5: PATTERN 5D

Rider may have a reader for all patterns.

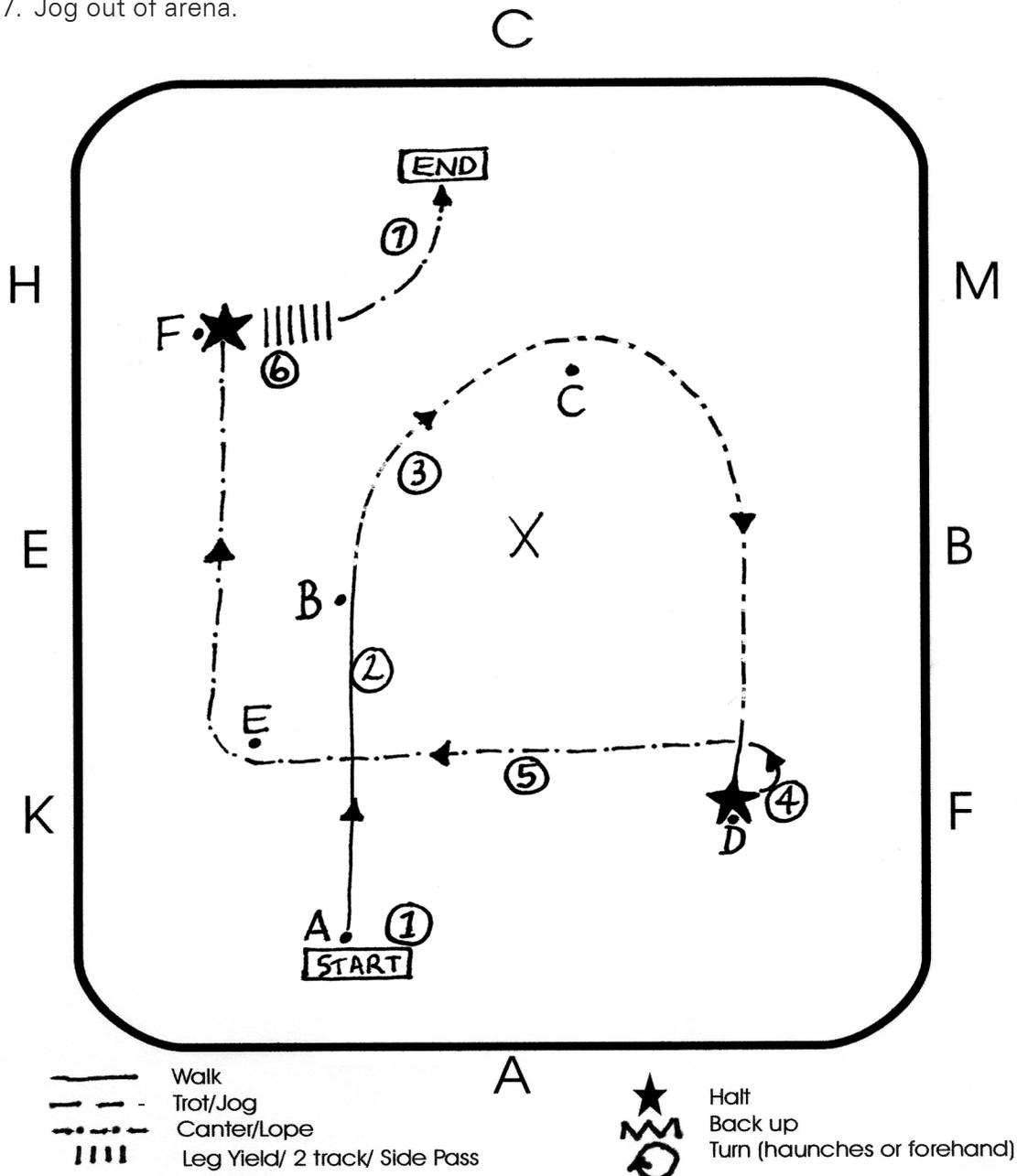
18. Wall a large half circle X-H-C.
19. Halt near C. Sidepass with at least 4 crossovers to the left to C.
20. At C, lope/canter a three loop serpentine to A, doing a simple lead change each time the A-C line is crossed (centre line of the arena).
21. At A, halt. Sidepass with at least 4 crossovers to the right.
22. Starting at A, lope/canter a three loop serpentine to C, doing a simple lead change every time the A-C line is crossed.
23. Halt at C. Correctly dismount and lead out. *End of Pattern 5*



# LEVEL FIVE: SHORT PATTERN

Rider may have a reader for all patterns. Short patterns should be ridden with ONE hand (Western). This pattern uses pylons for markers.

1. Start at A.
2. Walk to B.
3. At B, lope/cantern on the right lead around C to D.
4. Halt at D. Do a 90° turn on the haunches to the left. Hesitate, do a 180° turn on the haunches to the left to complete a 3/4 turn.
5. Lope/cantern on the left lead to a point half way between A and B, do a simple lead change and continue loping around E and ride to F.
6. At F, halt. Sidepass at least 8 steps to the right.
7. Jog out of arena.





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## LEVEL SIX: **DISMOUNTED SKILLS**

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- Explain and demonstrate coat, mane and tail care for your area of interest (English or Western). For example pulling manes, clipping, banding and braiding.
  
- Explain how your horse's four senses other than sight may affect his behaviour.
  
- Describe the digestive system of the horse.
  
- Explain the causes, symptoms, and treatment of colic.
  
- Explain and demonstrate how to safely give a horse an oral medication.
  
- Describe the life cycle of two internal parasites.
  
- Show how and where to give your horse an injection and explain safety precautions.
  
- Explain three types of lameness - causes, symptoms, diagnosis of location, and prevention or treatment.
  
- Give three reasons why a saddle may not fit a rider. Give three reasons why a saddle may not fit a horse.
  
- Name and describe three types of Western or English saddles and explain how they differ to suit their purpose.
  
- Name any pieces of auxiliary tack that you use for your special area of riding interest. What is its purpose and how should it fit.
  
- Judge and place two conformation classes of four horses and present written reasons for one and oral reasons for the other.
  
- Explain safe driving practices for a loaded horse trailer.
  
- Give three things to take into consideration on a long haul.

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*Evaluator's signature*

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*Date*



## LEVEL SIX: MOUNTED SKILLS

**To assess the rider levels:** Before you can assess, we must make sure that we are using a progressive format in lesson planning. That means the riding instructor should include a warm-up with each lesson and a review of previously taught skills so both rider and horse can progress. At every skill taught, we need to reinforce basic position, balance, suppleness, focus, timing and appropriate aids. We suggest that the individual skills be assessed first and only those who are successful at these skills be invited to ride the pattern. At all rider levels, the skills may be performed with two hands on the reins unless there is a reference to neck reining. Our preference would be that snaffle bits be used, but because safety is our number one concern, any humane bit may be used or refer to the standard set by your regional committee. To help the riders with pattern accuracy, please place  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  markers down the sides of the riding area and one at the middle of each end.

- Warm-up** – demonstrate your own warm-up including at least everything in the rider 5 warm-up plus shoulder in.
- Demonstrate a **haunches-in** of at least 6 strides at a **sit trot/jog**. Go both ways.
- Demonstrate **haunches-in halt** to **lope transition** in both directions.
- Demonstrate **haunches-in** at the **lope/canter** in both directions.
- Execute a **turn on the haunches** of at least 6 fluid crossovers with the horse correctly shaped or **walk pirouette** (English) in both directions.
- a) Explain and demonstrate 3 lead up exercises to produce a **two track/half pass**. b) Show a two-track/half pass of at least 3 strides in both directions 1) at a **walk** and, 2) at a **jog** or **sitting trot**. The lead up exercises may be used in the demonstration.
- Explain and demonstrate a **counter canter** on a curved and straight line in both directions.

- From a lope/canter, ride a **controlled gallop** (Western) or **hand gallop** (English) of at least 10 strides in both directions, then go back to a lope/canter with a smooth downward transition.
  
- Demonstrate: a) two or three **lateral exercises** in succession that will allow you to produce a smooth lope/canter transition and collection. Demonstrate that transition. b) Western riders demonstrate 2 lateral exercises using neck reining.
  
- a) Explain and demonstrate the aids to produce a **flying lead change**. b) Demonstrate a flying lead change in both directions.
  
- Ride the attached **pattern**. Include a **tack check, mount** and **dismount**. May be ridden 1 or 2 handed.

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*Evaluator's signature*

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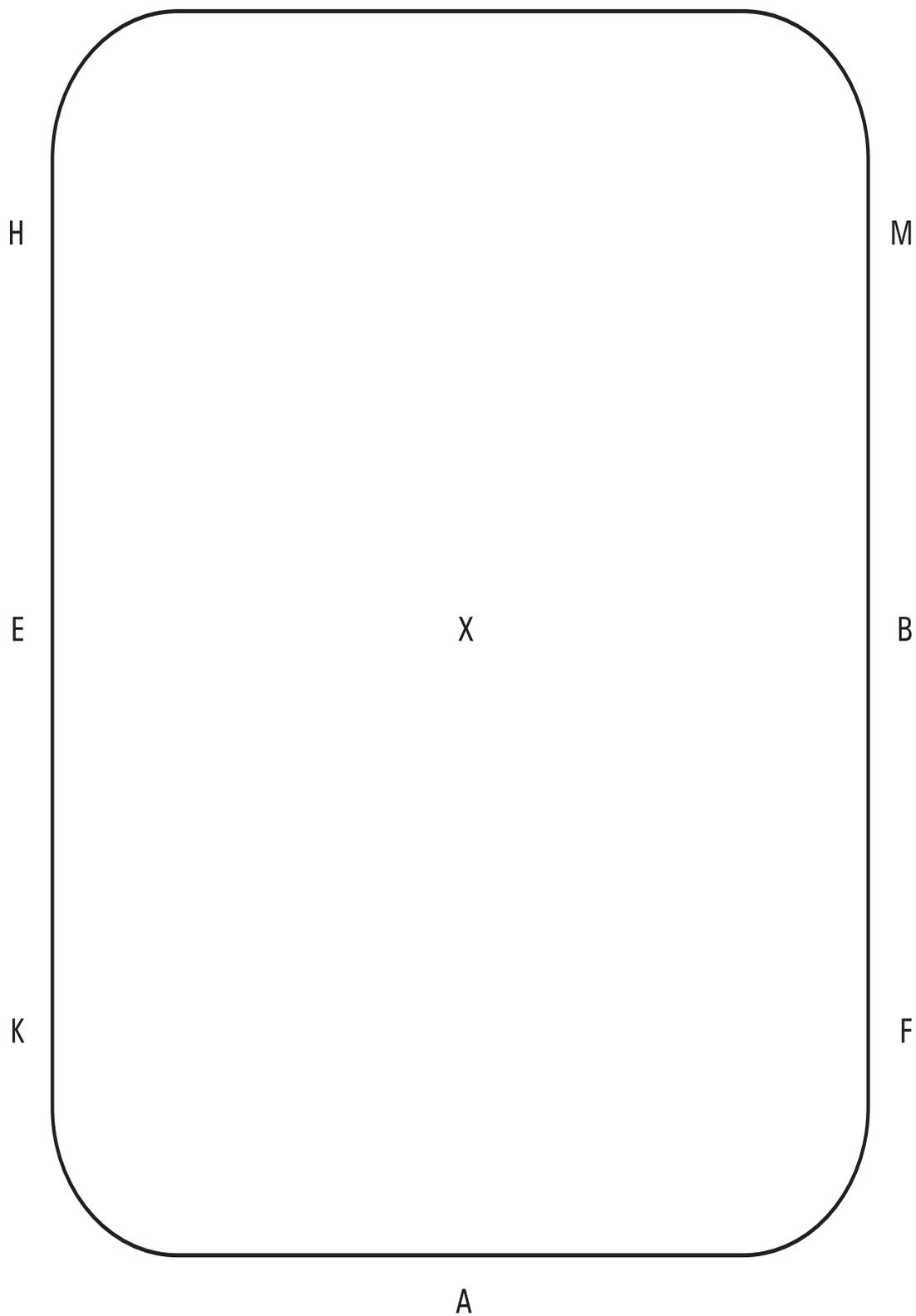
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# RIDER 6: **PATTERN**

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## **MAKE YOUR OWN PATTERN!**

C





## LEVEL SEVEN: **DISMOUNTED SKILLS**

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- Assist younger members with grooming and hoof care knowledge.
- Assist in teaching younger members about horse identification, colours, markings, breed conformations and evaluation.
- Be a good safety role model for younger members.
- Assist younger members in finding assistance dealing with horse health problems.
- Assist younger members to identify good and bad feed.
- Assist younger members in reading their horse's body language.
- Help younger members see correctly shoulders in, haunches in and lameness.
- Assist younger members with management of their facility.
- Assist younger members with their tack.

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*Evaluator's signature*

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*Date*



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## LEVEL SEVEN: MOUNTED SKILLS

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- Learn to broaden your riding abilities, try different events or disciplines.
- Assist younger members with any of the horse handling skills related to rein effects.
- Assist younger members with any of the horse handling skills related to laterals and collection.
- Be a good safety role model for younger members.
- Assist other members in developing riding patterns.

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*Evaluator's signature*

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*Date*





