

1 WINDING DOWN

OBJECTIVE: For students to **practice preparing for transitions and rating speed** while negotiating a simple weaving course at all three gaits.

EQUIPMENT:

- 12 CONES to form weaving lanes. Bending poles or jump standards can also be used.
- 1 BARREL.
- 2 CONES to mark start/finish line.

DIRECTIONS:

-  **#1**, ride to barrel and turn in a full circle around it.
-  **#1**, riding away from barrel, transition to left lead canter.
-  **#2**, weave through three wide cones at canter.
-  **#3**, transition to trot and weave through four medium cones.
-  **#4**, transition to walk and weave through six narrow cones before riding across finish line.

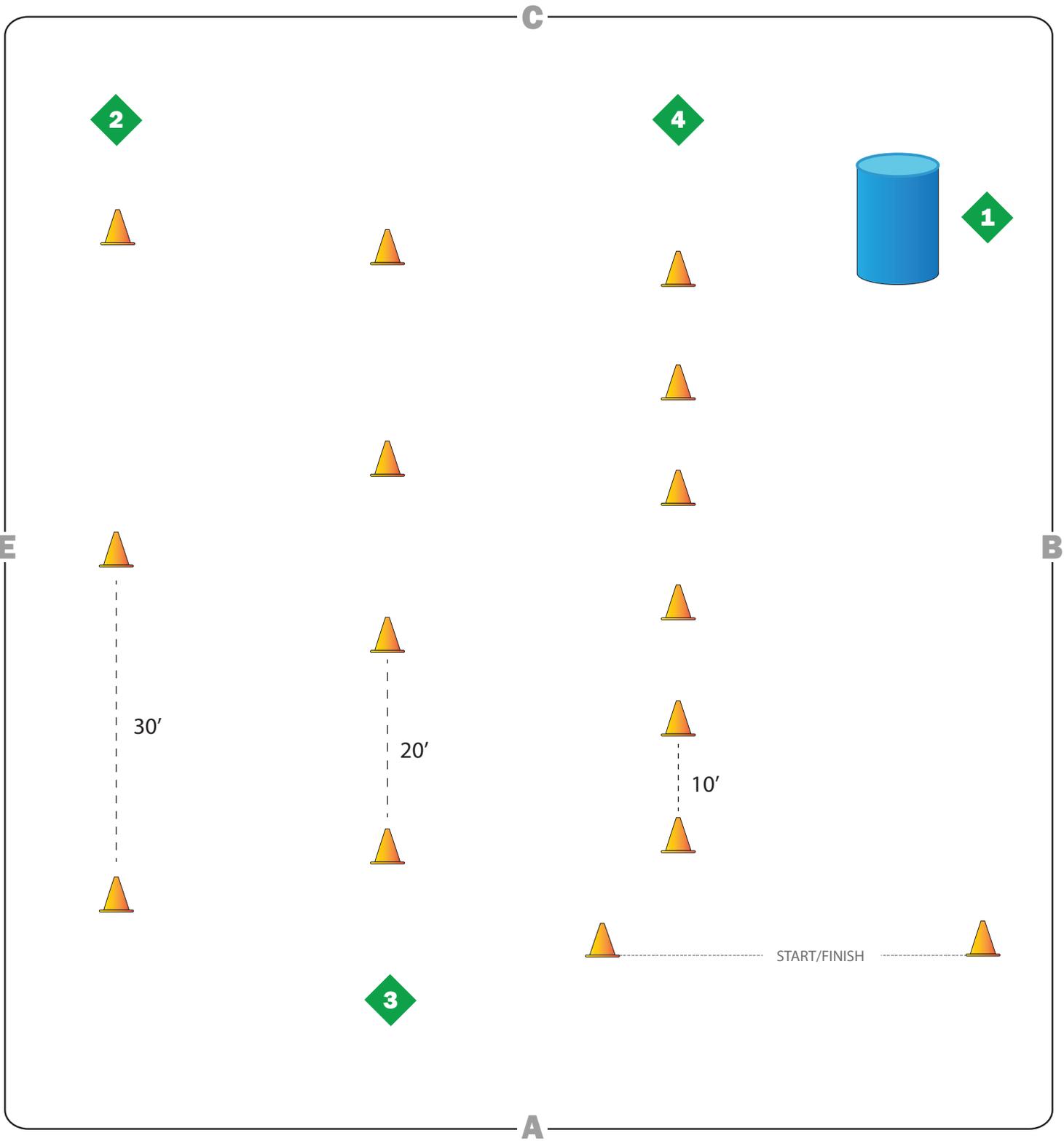
NOTES:

Green Level students are learning to ride the canter - and usually loving every minute of it. They may be eager to add some speed to obstacle courses and other timed events. However, at this Level, asking them to steer through technical patterns at the canter or race back toward the herd can be an invitation for disaster.

This deceptively-simple course gives students the adrenaline rush of cantering while emphasizing the need for control. The cones keep everyone steering on a focused track, while the gradually decreasing gait encourages students to find different “gears” in their horse’s walk and trot, especially when racing against the clock.

Make sure students understand that the changes of gait are mandatory - **if they have not successfully transitioned by the next line of cones, they must circle before they begin to weave.** You may also require a circle or a halt and step of reinback for anyone who breaks gait in the trot or walk cones.

For an additional challenge, ask students to ride the course backwards - but insist on walk between the barrel and the finish line!



Obstacle Course - Green Level #1 - Winding Down

#2 SURVIVOR COURSE

OBJECTIVE: To test students' ability to perform **safety drills**, including **retrieving dropped stirrups** and **emergency stops** at the trot.

- EQUIPMENT:**
- 9 CONES to form CIRCLE and NO-STIRRUP ZONE.
 - 6 POLES to form long BRIDGE.
 - 1 CAVALETTI, or 1 pair JUMP STANDARDS and 2 POLES to form CROSSRAIL.
 - 2 CONES to mark start/finish line.
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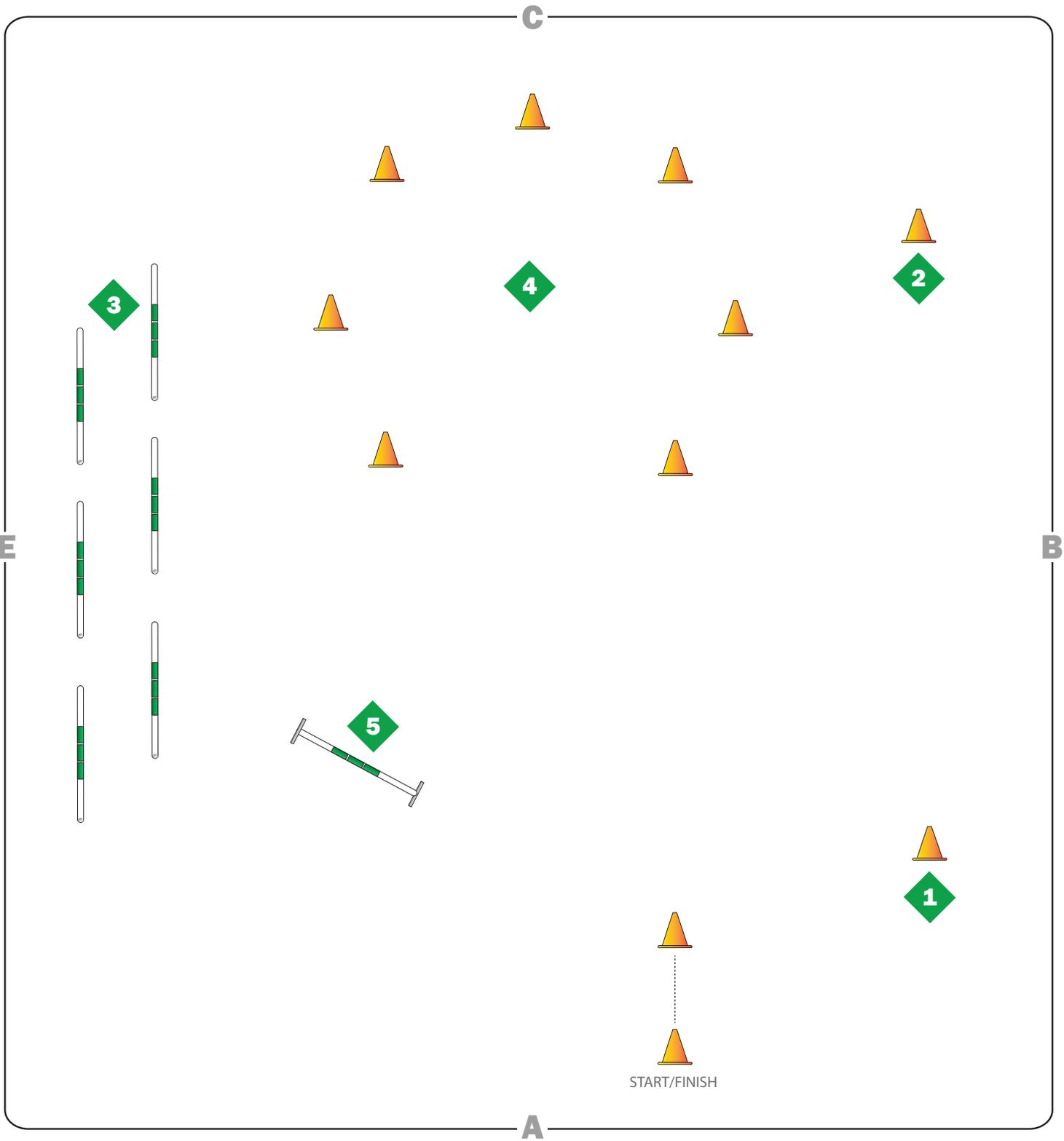
- DIRECTIONS:**
-  **#1**, remove feet from stirrups.
 -  **#2**, retrieve stirrups without stopping before transitioning to canter.
 -  **#3**, halt on long bridge and stand for five seconds. Pulley rein only if required.
 -  **#4**, ride into cone circle and disengage hindquarters BEFORE exiting.
 -  **#5, if** course has been successfully completed, ride over cavaletti/crossrail before crossing finish line.
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NOTES:

If your Green Level students are anything like ours, they are extremely excited to be learning how to canter and jump. This course uses a small jump as a fun incentive to ride a careful, controlled course, while testing emergency skills such as a one-rein stop and a pulley rein.

The obstacles can technically be ridden at any gait, allowing you to re-purpose the course with walk/trot and advanced students as well. However, **for Green Level, we recommend a lively working trot for most of the course**, sneaking in a short canter between the no-stirrup zone and the stop on the bridge. By this point, the mechanics of the emergency stops should start to become muscle memory for students, and they'll need a bit of speed and excitement to truly test their effectiveness.

As in all your safety drills, prioritize the horse's comfort. Emphasize that riders must disengage hindquarters and use their pulley reins GENTLY, with a fraction of the intensity a real runaway might require!



Obstacle Course - Green Level #2 - Green Survivor Course

#3 CRISSCROSS POLES

OBJECTIVE: For students to **improve accuracy** riding through a variety ground pole formations, all designed to encourage straightness.

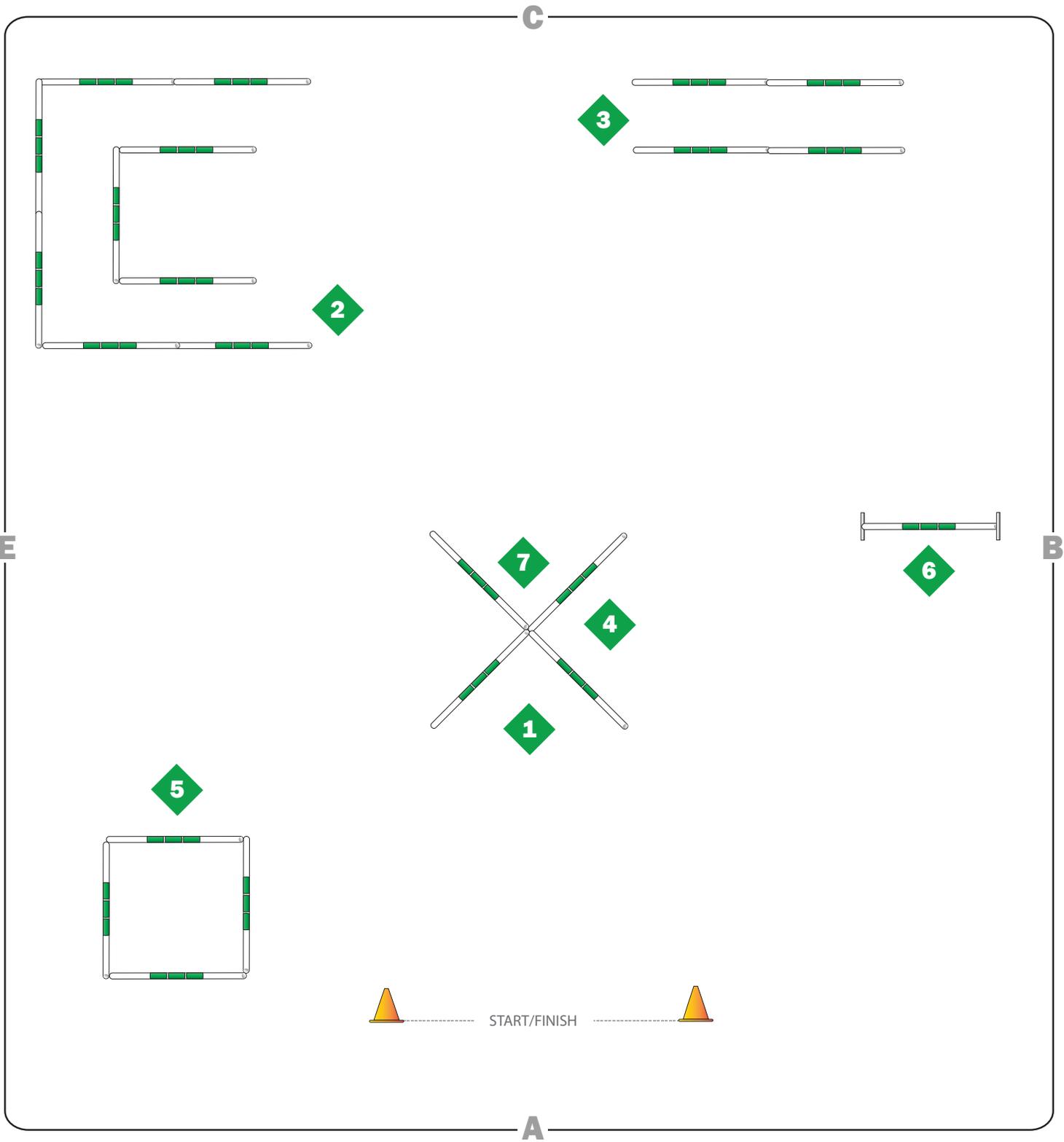
- EQUIPMENT:**
- Up to 22 POLES.
 - If you are short on poles, CONES may be used to form BRIDGE and BOX.
 - CAVALETTI may be used for obstacle #6.
 - 2 CONES to mark start/finish line.
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- DIRECTIONS:**
-  **#1**, ride down centerline from A to C, stepping over center of the X.
 -  **#2**, ride through the horseshoe.
 -  **#3**, ride onto bridge, halt, and back up three steps before exiting.
 -  **#4**, ride half turn reverse from B to E, stepping over center of the X.
 -  **#5**, step inside box and turn 360° before exiting.
 -  **#6**, ride over ground pole/cavaletti.
 -  **#7**, ride around bridge and up centerline from C to A, stepping over center of X.
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NOTES: **X marks the spot!** This course is great for riders who tend to ride inattentive or sloppy lines when changing direction, and prepares students for some important course-riding concepts. Students will need to be able to find and hold a line, riding their horse to the center of every obstacle.

You can mix and match obstacles and **change what happens inside the box**, especially if using this course for students at varying levels of ability. Turn the space into a Challenge Box and ask students to drop and retrieve stirrups, demonstrate a stirrup stand, or go Around the World. More advanced riders can demonstrate a turn on the forehand or haunches in the box, or sidepass around the horseshoe.

Don't forget to **establish penalties** for stepping outside a path or missing a pole!



Obstacle Course - Green Level #3 - CrissCross Poles

#4 GOT GAME?

OBJECTIVE: For students to combine fast-paced **mounted games skills**, individually or in a relay.

EQUIPMENT:

- 5 BENDING POLES.
 - 2 FLAG CONES. Place minimum of 1 FLAG inside the cone closest to C.
 - 1 BARREL or overturned TRASH BIN.
 - 1 2-GALLON WASH BUCKET. Inside bucket, place 1 TENNIS BALL per rider.
 - 1 empty HI-LO NET.
 - 2 BENDING POLES set with RING HOLDERS. Place minimum of 1 RING on pole closest to A.
 - 2 CONES to mark start/finish line.
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DIRECTIONS:

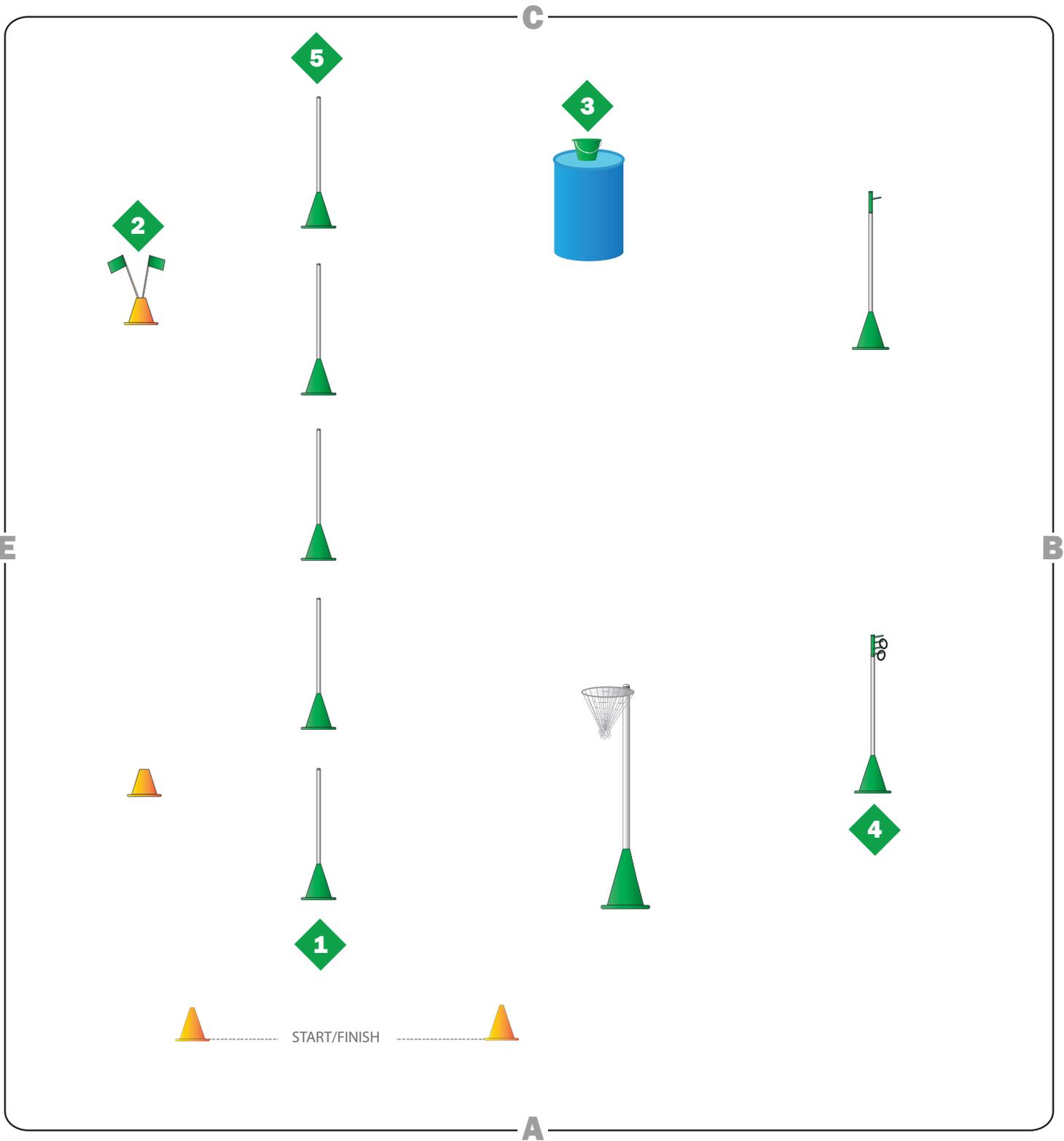
-  **#1**, weave through bending poles.
 -  **#2**, pick up flag. Carry to empty flag cone and place inside before returning to C end of arena.
 -  **#3**, pick up tennis ball from bucket on barrel. Place inside Hi-Lo net.
 -  **#4**, pick up ring from ring holder. Carry to second bending pole and place on peg.
 -  **#5**, weave through bending poles before crossing finish line.
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NOTES:

This fast and fun mounted games course requires a few pieces of specialized equipment, but the **Hi-Lo net** and **ring holders** are versatile props we use frequently. The games improve accuracy and balance - we secretly refer to this as the "Heels down" games course, especially when using regulation-sized equipment. The course also provides opportunities for Green Level students to test out their newfound cantering skills while reminding them that **accuracy always wins!**

Don't forget to **establish rules for corrections**: do you want riders to dismount and correct mistakes such as a dropped ring? Do you have a volunteer Ground Buddy who can hand the rider dropped equipment? If you are short on equipment, recruit a Ground Buddy to help reset flags, tennis balls and rings between each round.

Games skills included: weaving, dunking, flags, Hi-Lo.



Obstacle Course - Green Level #4 - Got Game?

#5 ROADBLOCKS

OBJECTIVE: For students to **develop awareness of horse's body position** by riding turns and lines requiring alignment of hindquarters and shoulders.

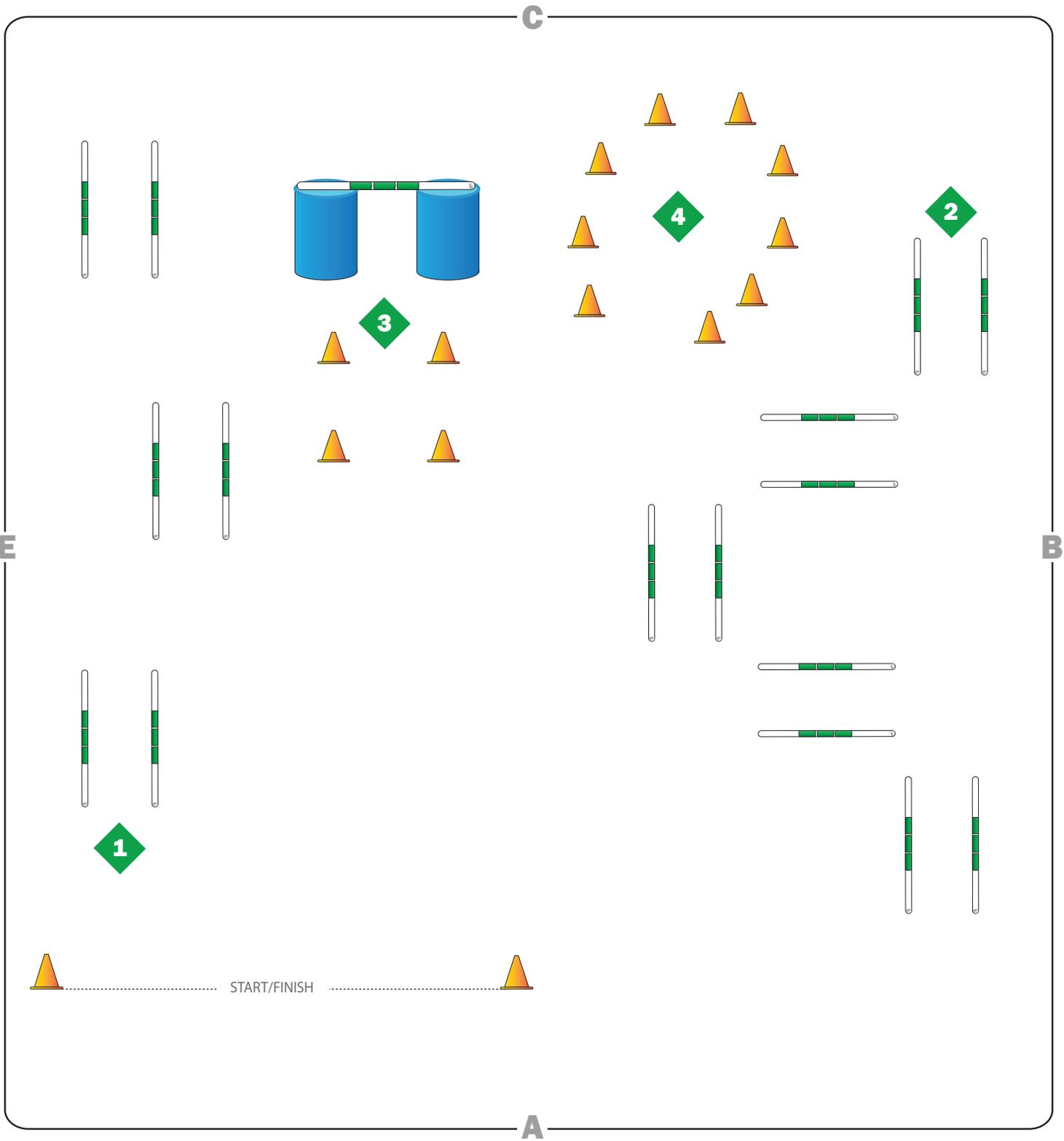
- EQUIPMENT:**
- 15 POLES used to make OFFSET BRIDGES and MAZE. Lines of CONES or CHALK may be used instead.
 - 9 CONES used to form CIRCLE.
 - 4 CONES and 2 BARRELS used to form BARRICADE. Place 1 POLE or a pool noodle on top of barrels.
 - 2 CONES to mark start/finish line.
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- DIRECTIONS:**
-  **#1**, ride through offset bridges.
 -  **#2**, ride through maze.
 -  **#3**, ride through cones and halt with horse's nose in front of barricade. Back up through cones to exit.
 -  **#4**, enter circle and turn 360° before returning to finish line.
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NOTES: Our Green Level students love this **fast-paced course full of detours**, especially given the opportunity for a thrilling canter back toward the finish line. But there's enough going on here that you can challenge your advanced students as well, especially if you make the space inside your bridges and "cul de sac" circle TIGHT!

The deceptively simple obstacles ask students to leg yield, to set up a turn, and to move the horse's shoulders without losing control of their hindquarters. They'll learn to feel where the horse's hind legs are as they back out of the barricade, and prepare for a prompt transition out of the circle so they can enjoy the sprint to the finish.

You can **extend the course** by sending students back through the maze and offset bridges after obstacle #4, playing up the "Dead end!" theme. Just **make sure that everyone slows to a walk before entering the barricade** - especially if they are riding eager jumpers who might take the 3' obstacle as an invitation!



Obstacle Course - Green Level #5 - Roadblocks