

# Decker Pack Saddle

## Sawbuck and Decker Pack Saddle Differences

Some differences between a **Sawbuck** and **Decker Pack Saddle** are obvious. A Sawbuck Pack Saddle has crossbucks instead of metal hoops. A Sawbuck Pack Saddle lacks the half-breed – the padded canvas cover with pack boards of the Decker Pack Saddle. And lastly, most Sawbucks are “double rigged”, using either a Sawbuck double pack cinch or two single pack cinches instead of one like the Decker Pack Saddle. Some packers cite this as an advantage for the sawbuck, saying it stabilizes the load and better distributes the friction around the animal's belly.



However, some differences may not be quite so clear, but are important to consider when choosing between the two. The Decker Pack Saddle is stronger than the Sawbuck, mostly because of the metal hoops. The crossbucks of a Sawbuck, being made of wood, are more likely to break if a mule falls or rolls on them. The Decker Pack Saddle will often better survive a wreck.

Another advantage of the Decker Pack Saddle is rigging position. The rigging on a Decker Pack Saddle buckles to the tree beneath the half-breed and is easily adjustable over a wide range, allowing you to adjust the position of the Decker Pack Cinch and prevent sores of your pack stock. The rigging of Sawbuck Pack Saddle is screwed or riveted to the tree and cannot be as easily adjusted.



Decker Pack Saddles are better suited to heavier loads because of the half-breed with pack boards. The pack boards help distribute the weight of your load, whether mantled or packed in panniers, more broadly along the animal's side. Additionally, the lower portion of the half-breed behind the pack boards is typically padded, thus providing greater comfort and protection from the load for your pack animal.

Decker hooks are another benefit to using the Decker Pack Saddle. Decker hooks are typically made of brass and are used in sets of four. These hooks thread onto the pannier hanger straps and can then be hooked to the hoops on your Decker pack saddle. With Decker hooks you can attach panniers more quickly and you won't have to lift the panniers as high or for as long.

Mainly because of the half-breed and to some extent, the Duplex-grade stainless steel hoops, a fully rigged Decker Pack Saddle will be heavier than the Sawbuck, weighing in around 30 pounds. A Sawbuck will weigh only 18-20 pounds.

A Pack Saddle is a simple enough piece of equipment that you should be able to easily determine one that is well-made. The bars of the tree should be softwood and should fit your animal without gouging or excessive rocking. The hoops on the Decker Pack Saddle should be either steel or brass and should be attached with bolts or rivets. The rigging should be of quality heavy harness leather.

Rob, would you list this Decker pack saddle on our site it's an older saddle but still in pretty good shape, standard Decker bars, comes with saddle pad and a pair of open top iron cloth pack bags \$180 for the whole set up

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