

Foam vs. Wool



**Stübben
Portos Elite
with Foam Panel**



**Stübben Euphoria
with gusseted
wool panel**

Wool, Wool, Wool, and one more time for good measure, WOOL! Stübben loves wool-flocked saddles. Why? Because your horse loves wool flocked saddles. The benefits of a foam panel vs. a wool flocked panel have been a long debated discussion in saddle making and every saddle maker has the option to stuff their saddles with whatever they want, and most have a reason for their choice. We are not going to sell foam panels short, after all our much loved Portos saddle comes with an optional foam panel, but if pure performance and comfort for your horse are what you are after then sticking with wool is the right choice and here is why.

Wool panels will conform to your horses back over time and can be easily adjusted to fit should your horse have a significant change in body condition. In contrast, a foam panel will always return to the same shape for a consistent fit, but the entire panel needs to be replaced with a new one if you have to make any adjustments for fit. Wool panels absorb the heat and moisture off your horses back reducing muscle fatigue. A foam panel will always run hotter; this is a similar problem to heat build up in a foam mattress. Communication between the horse and rider is enhanced with a wool panel over a foam panel. The foam essentially absorbs your aids where the wool transfers the energy back and forth between horse and rider making for more clear and responsive aids. This absorption quality in a foam panel does make for a slightly softer seat feel for the rider. As the riders weight comes down in the seat the panel will compress more than a wool saddle creating a softer “feel.” This is one reason many manufacturers choose a foam panel, but in truth the main reason is cost. It is by far more cost effective to use foam because it is less expensive and easier to produce than wool and takes no special skill to form into an effective panel. This cuts down significantly on manufacturing cost. For some companies this is a good enough reason to use foam exclusively, but for Stübben, where the horse comes first, we’ll stick with wool.



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Do you have questions for Stübben? Send them to info@stubbennorthamerica.com for a chance to have your question featured on a Stübben tidbit.