

MoHawk Skis

Crossover Skis from Starting Line Products

Last season we told you about the latest ski design from Starting Line Products, the MoHawk skis. This new ski profile was an effort to combine the on-trail handling of their wildly popular Straight Line Tracking (SLT) design with the added flotation of a wider profile, making it well suited for the growing crossover segment of sleds that are used both on and off trail.

The MoHawk ski has many design features that make it SLP's most versatile ever offered. From the SLT it utilizes the famous "Rocker Keel" bottom design (patented banana curvature) to reduce steering effort. On hard packed trails the bottom curvature provides a shorter carbide contact, providing easy steering while reducing the lever-effect of a longer straight carbide runner, yet maintaining excellent penetration and response.

Just like the Straight Line Tracking ski, the MoHawk combines the "Rocker Keel" with an hourglass center keel shape and gull wing edges that significantly reduces darting when exposed to ruts in the trail. Add to this proven package a smaller version of the SLP Powder Pro ski's flared outer edges to increase flotation and steering control by keeping the snow under the ski rather than allowing it to wash over the top.

The new ski also has traction knobbies on the top side edges of the ski, giving the skis the MoHawk appearance and name. These grippers give the rider something to step on and have boot traction when you are stuck and have to climb around on the skis.

Finally, the MoHawk utilizes a controlled flex pattern provided by its cross section, its design and new loop material which allows the ski to flex and absorb impacts as it negotiates through the terrain.

This new flex pattern is a major factor in the ski's handling characteristics. In developing this ski, SLP found that if they allowed it to flex as it negotiated through a corner or across rough terrain, it would provide an even more predictable feel. The snow and ice that the ski bottom, side and runner are exposed to in a corner varies dramatically. Typically you will have soft snow on top with inconsistent layers below. This is made worse when lots of sleds have been traveling across it. On this ski, the engineered flex pattern combined with the bottom design will, in most cases, keep the skis from losing their grip.

We got our hands on a set of these new skis and mounted them to our 2014 Ski-Doo Renegade Backcountry X 800. We made many modifications to this sled in an attempt to build our version of an ideal 50/50 crossover sled, one that was equally capable on trail and off trail. The stock skis on the Backcountry X were more of an aggressive off-trail ski and not as good on-trail as the standard Pilot skis found on a standard Renegade X model, so we figured the MoHawk skis would be right at home on the BCX with our conversion to a Cobra 1.6" lug height track, again seeking a 50/50 capability both on and off trail.

After several thousands of miles on this combination, we could not have been happier with our selections and the overall performance of the MoHawk skis. Going down hard packed rutted trails or softer freshly groomed trails it was just as if we had a set of Straight Line Tracking skis up front. The sled gave us predictable steering with reduced effort and minimal darting. We found the MoHawk skis to be a perfect match for the on trail expectations.

And then we got into some crazy deep fresh lake effect snow. This is where the SLT skis could be improved upon, and the MoHawk did just that. Where the SLT skis are only 6" wide, the MoHawk skis are a full 7 3/8" wide (187mm). The 7 3/8" overall width combined with the vertical sidewall and "Powder Control Wings" delivers the bite and flotation we desired. In off-trail powder snow conditions we felt the MoHawk ski was nearly as aggressive as the Powder Pro ski and offered slightly more flotation. It was extremely predictable but felt really similar to the Powder Pro. On the trail, again it was nearly as aggressive as the Powder Pro but more predictable. It tended to corner flatter and we felt we could carve through the corners with more confidence.

Overall, we were surprised by the improvement and our expectations were exceeded. The MoHawk skis made our sled even more predictable in the corners. Flat handling, aggressive bite without any push while requiring only light rider effort with substantially reduced negative feedback; these skis allowed us to negotiate a corner much easier and the confidence level went up considerably. We felt completely in control without having to muscle the sled around, so at the end of a long day we had more energy.

Like with all other skis from Starting Line Products, you order the ski bottoms, then a set of mounts for your particular sled, a set of loops and a set of carbide runners. The MoHawk skis are just now being made available at all SLP dealers, or can be ordered directly from Starting Line Products at www.startinglineproducts.com or 208-529-0244.