

SpeedsealLife Kit Test Update

In the *Practical Sailor* August 2010 Issue's Chandlery, we reported on the installation of a SpeedsealLife kit aboard one of our test boats, a Union 36 sloop powered by a 43-horsepower Beta Marine inboard. An improvement on the original Speedseal (*PS*, July 15, 2005), the SpeedsealLife is designed to extend the life of a water pump impeller, even in a run-dry situation.

The SpeedsealLife provides the rapid impeller access made famous by the original Speedseal, but it also incorporates a Teflon (PTFE) washer between the pump cover plate and a rotating brass disk that rotates with the pump impeller. In a typical water-cooled inboard engine, the seawater pump's nitrile or neoprene impeller rubs against a stationary brass plate (the pump housing cover) and is lubricated by the water being pumped to cool the engine. In a run-dry situation, no lubrication means the impeller will be destroyed fairly quickly (2½ minutes on average) long before the engine overtemp alarm will sound.

We installed and began testing the SpeedsealLife in June 2010 and pulled it while winterizing our Chesapeake-based



The Speedseal Life kit installed on our test boat's engine looked as good as new when we removed it after 73 engine hours.

test boat this past winter. After two sailing seasons and 73 hours of engine use, there was no noticeable wear on the Teflon washer or the brass disc.

We then shipped both the washer and disc to the manufacturer for evaluation. The company concurred with our observations but recommended replacing both the disc and the washer every two years—a cost of \$18—just to be on the safe side, so we heeded their advice.

SpeedsealLife kits—available for engines and generators, including Yanmar, Volvo, Johnson, and Beta, and Jabsco

pumps—cost about \$100, including shipping. Upgrade kits are also available for original Speedseal owners. According to the manufacturer, the kits come with the guarantee that any unsatisfied buyer will be given a full refund upon request.

Bottom line: The SpeedsealLife kit was easy to install and has held up well to two seasons of use. We recommend it for those looking for added engine protection. ▲

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