EASY ON THAT STARTER!

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I always cringe when I see it happening. Guys using starters on Ohlssons, Browns and other old plain bearing/bushing engines and reed valve half A's. Most of the old engines were never designed for use with starters. Some engines are tougher than others and a few have steel shims between drive washer and case front, which will sometimes prevent starter damage. If you insist on using a starter, you should consider installing such a shim.

If you can see any black oil behind the drive washer, you are looking at grindings which have just become coarse lapping compound. And if clearances aren't right inside, you may be driving the crankpin and/or rod into the backplate and producing more abrasive grit which is eating away at everything inside. Anytime you find black oil residue or fine metallic particles in oil residue, metal is eating metal. If you're lucky it might be just a loose mounting bolt or exhaust extension on the outside. If not, the engine needs to be taken apart, cleaned out and the problem fixed.

An even worse practice is winding up the starter and jamming it into the spinner. This would be like getting your car moving by putting a floor jack under the differential, spinning up the tires and having someone drop the jack. Why would you do that? It just puts harsher loads on everything for no particular reason. In high school physics class we were taught that static friction is greater than sliding friction. There was even a lab demonstration. Remember? If you press the starter against the drive assembly then hit the switch you're less likely to get slippage, a scratched up spinner, or worse damage. If your battery or starter isn't up to the job, try backing the prop up against compression, and start from there, so the prop has some inertia to help get past compression.

I've watched a running reed valve engine that had been started with a starter. Gritty oil flowed from the front bearing, back along the case, to feed itself into the intake so it could chew on everything inside. When taken apart, grit had worked its way well back inside the crank bushing, even though there is supposedly a net outward pressure which should act to keep that area clean.