

Greg Anderson to sit out for a bit...

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NHRA Pro Stock champ Greg Anderson to miss first three months of season

Anderson, 52, of Mooresville, N.C., will undergo heart surgery in the coming days to repair a heart condition that he's had since birth. He is expected to miss the first six races of the season.

"It's really not a big deal," Anderson told NHRA.com. "I was born with a bicuspid aortic heart valve (two valve openings instead of three). It's something we've kept track of over the years, and my doctor has decided it's time to make some repairs so I stay in good shape.

"I will miss the first few races of the season, but once the doctor says I'm good to go, I'm gonna be right back at it looking for another Pro Stock championship."

Although Anderson will be sidelined, his Summit Racing Equipment/KB Racing Camaro will not, as eight-time FIA European Drag Racing Pro Stock champ Jimmy Alund will campaign the car in Anderson's absence.

The new season opens Feb. 6-9 with the annual 54th annual Circle K NHRA Winternationals at Auto Club Raceway in Pomona, Calif.

A native of Sweden, Alund is one of the most dominating drag racers in Europe, having won the Pro Stock championship eight times in the last 10 seasons (2004 through 2009, 2011 and 2013). En route to last year's championship, he won five of the last six races and also set that continent's Pro Stock elapsed time (6.534 seconds) and speed (213.31 mph) records in the quarter-mile.

Ironically enough, Alund's championship winning car last season had a KB Racing motor under the hood, so he already has a familiarity about the type of horsepower he'll be trying to reign in while driving Anderson's car.

"I'm really honored to be a part of this organization," Alund told NHRA.com. "I have some big shoes to fill — Greg is one of the best Pro Stock drivers in the world, bar none. I believe that I'm up to the challenge,

though. I'm looking forward to helping KB Racing win another championship."

This will mark Alund's second stint on the U.S.-based NHRA national tour, having competed in several Pro Stock events during the 2010 season.

"In the U.S., you are running against the best of the best," Alund said. "After all, this is the home of drag racing, so you expect that. We don't race full-time in Europe like the Pro teams do here, but racing is racing — we are just as competitive as the racers in America. This is a great opportunity for me to show that to American race fans."

Alund's first two qualifying attempts to make the Winternationals field will take place Friday, Feb. 7.

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