RULES OF AFRICA CUP 2026
CHEERLEADING RULES

This document covers the basic rules for the 2026 competition. The cheerleading performances are as much a highlight of the festival as the football is. The cheerleading teams put a significant amount of effort into their outstanding routines. Some of the teams even hire professional coaches, to help develop their routines.

1. **SCOPE OF THE RULES AND INFORMATION DOCUMENT**
   This document is applicable to the cheerleading competition that runs concurrent to the football tournament. It contains the regulations that govern the cheerleading competition and must be used by all cheerleading teams and coaches. The Cheerleading Coordinator is responsible for maintaining the Rules and Information document, and for ensuring that it is followed.

2. **TEAM MEMBERS**
   Each team may have a maximum of 9 cheerleaders per team, including Cheerleading Coach. Only 8 cheerleaders are allowed on the floor during the Special Performance. Teams may be a combination of male and female members. Members making up the cheerleading team must be full-time employees, working for DHL for a minimum of 1 year **as of 17 April 2025**. Teams will be disqualified if any team members do not comply with this rule. Every cheerleader must be approved by the Country Manager and HR Manager.

3. **PRE-SELECTION** Cheerleading teams are selected before departure. Cheerleading routine videos are to be submitted to **Info@dhlafricacup.com** by **23 January 2026**. 6 Teams will be chosen by the AMB by **3 February 2026**

4. **TEAM INFORMATION**
   Each team wishing to participate must provide a list of cheerleaders' names **by 30 December 2026.**

5. **SIDELINE PERFORMANCE**
   A sideline performance will not be a competition element. We encourage the teams to cheer for their football teams during the matches, but these performances will not be judged or rewarded.

6. **SPECIAL PERFORMANCE CATEGORY**
   The special performance will be judged as Cheer Basic. In this category, stunts are limited to shoulder height. Cheer Criteria - 10 Points
   - Crowd Leading Ability: The ability to lead the crowd for teams' Nation, use of signs, poms, megaphone, practical use of stunts/ pyramids and execution (native language is encouraged). Stunts - 60 Points
   - Partner Stunts (between 2 participants): difficulty, execution of skill, number of bases, number of stunt groups, synchronisation and variety.
   - Pyramids: difficulty, transitions moving into or dismounting out of skills, execution, timing and creativity.
   - Basket Tosses: execution of skills, height, synchronisation (when applicable), difficulty and variety. Gymnastic - 10 Points
   - Tumbling: group tumbling, execution of skills (includes jumps, if applicable), difficulty, proper technique, and synchronisation. Overall - 20 Points
   - Flow of routine/transitions: execution of routine components, flow, pace, timing of skills, and transitions.
   - Overall Presentation: presentation, showmanship, dance, facials, energy and crowd effect.

6 **SPECIAL PERFORMANCE LENGTH** Each team will have a maximum of three minutes to demonstrate its cheerleading style and expertise. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or the first note of the music; whichever comes first. Each team's performance must include at least one cheer. If the team uses music, it must not exceed two minutes and thirty seconds. Thus, special performance should last for three minutes in total with maximum two minutes and thirty seconds of music; the remaining time can be used for vocal cheer(s). The Special Performance starts with either the cheer element or the music as per the team's choice. However, it is not allowed to split the music in 2 pieces and perform the cheer in the middle of the special performance.

6 **SPECIAL PERFORMANCE AREA, ENTRY AND EXIT** The performance area will be approximately 9 × 9 square meters, with actual performance floor size of 7 × 7 square meters. After the team is introduced, it enters the performance area and promptly assumes its starting position. The team may briefly greet or acknowledge the audience prior to assuming their start position, however excessive posing is discouraged. Following completion of its performance, the team is to exit promptly from the performance area, thanking or acknowledging the audience briefly.

6.3. **FALSE STARTS**

A false start is defined as when the team is unable to start their performance after assuming their starting position, or the performance is interrupted prior to its intended conclusion. An acceptable false start is when the circumstances causing the false start are not within the teams' control. This could include failure of equipment or foreign objects interfering with the performance. The team will be allowed to repeat their performance if the head judge deems it an acceptable false start. Any decision made by the head judge is final.

NOTE: A repeated performance will be judged purely based on that performance. An interrupted performance will not be considered in the scores.

6.4. **SAFETY**

In order to ensure the safety of cheerleaders, any pyramids above two levels, must be carried out with (extra) spotters. If complex stunts are performed without spotters, points may be deducted. Spotters may or may not be a team member of the cheerleading squad. They will not be counted as part of the team member numbers, if they only support the team during pyramids. In this case, they must enter the performance area for the pyramids only and then stand outside during the remainder of the performance. Music must be sent to the attention of **louise@treblegroup.com**. In case the music cannot start at the beginning of the team's special performance, the Cheerleading Coach (or deputy) of the performing team must make themselves known at the start of the performance. Preferably, they should stand next to the music installation to give a sign that prompts the music's start.

6.5 **PERFORMANCES AND TEAMS**

Performances will consist of the Cheer Basic category. All scores will be posted on the score board within 4 hours of completion of the performance (sooner if possible). The score sheets will be submitted via email to the Cheerleader Coach by end of day.

6.6. **FIRST ROUND**

The first two rounds will take place on Day 1 with the teams competing at set times. The judges for this will be the cheerleading judging panel, as described in 6.8.

6.7. **THE FINAL**

The final round on Day 2. The judges for this will be the cheerleading judging panel, as described in 6.8.

6.8. **JUDGING**

The panel of judges will consist of independent professional cheerleading judges, judging all scoring elements of the special performance.

7. **SCORING**

The maximum score is 100 points, first and second place will be awarded to teams with the highest scores. If there is a tie, the team with the highest skill score will be declared the winner. For those teams that have skill scores identical, they may be asked to repeat their performance in its entirety for re-judging. The scores will start at zero.

8. **CHART OF DEDUCTIONS / PENALTIES**

Penalties will be given by the deductions judge in the following cases:

Wearing Accessories; (per team)

- Jewellery (2 points)
- Loose hair/Long nails (2 points)
- Other Apparel/Accessories (2 points)

Timing; (per team)

- Failure to report at the Performance area on time (2 points)
- Exceeding maximum routine length (2 points)

General; (per team)

- Blatant rules violation (5 points)
- Performance hazard (2 points)
- Ineligible/incorrect number of athletes

Stunts; (per occurrence)

- Fall/Drop during pyramids, tumbling etc. (1 point)
- Early Dismounts / Releases (1 point)

9. **PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS**
Questions concerning the rules or procedures of the cheerleading competition will be handled exclusively by the Cheerleading Coach and directed to the Cheerleading Coordinator. Questions concerning the team's performance should be addressed to the Cheerleading Coordinator immediately after the performance.

9.1. **DISPUTES**
Questions concerning the final score or team rankings must be handled exclusively by your Cheerleading Coach, and directed to the head of the Cheerleading Organisation. Any protest will be evaluated by the head of the Cheerleading Organisation and a final decision made to uphold or dismiss the protest.

9.2. **SPORTSMANSHIP**
All participants shall conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the cheerleading competition. The Cheerleading Coach is responsible for seeing that team members and any other persons affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly throughout the entire event. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification.

9.3. **INTERPRETATION**
Interpretation of any aspect of these regulations, or any decision involving any other issue of the cheerleading competition, will be rendered by the Organising Steering Committee. The committee will render a judgment in an effort to ensure that the competition proceeds in a manner consistent with the general spirit of the cheerleading competition.

9.4. **USE OF ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES** The use of drugs is strictly against DHL policy.

10. **DISCLAIMER**
These rules are subject to revision at any time. Any revisions will take precedence over the original version.

For any inquiries contact info@dhlafricacup.com or Stan.chetty@dhl.com