RULES OF AFRICA CUP 2026
FOOTBALL RULES

DHL AFRICA CUP is a DHL Express engagement event held every two years, and brings our CIS Super Stars Together As One in a sport that unites us all, regardless of culture, language, country and age.

1. DHL entities from DHL Express SSA are welcome to participate in a football team and submit a cheerleading team for pre-selection by video, plus an allocated number of supporters. Any exception is to be pre-approved by **Stan Chetty** at **stan.chetty@dhl.com**. or **info@dhlafricacup.com**. Please note that supporters can NOT replace football players or cheerleaders.

   a) **Complete Country Teams:** South Africa, SSA, Nigeria, Kenya, Angola, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal/Mauritania, Tanzania, Mozambique, Mauritius, Uganda, Ethiopia, Cameroon, DRC & Gabon. The maximum players per team is fifteen (15), plus one coach – sixteen (16) in total.

   Each team may have a maximum of 15 people including a Football Coach (16) in total (player allocation per country will be sent to Country Managers) 11 players and 4 substitutes per game. A team violating the rule will lose the game; the other team will claim 3 points. The score will be 3-0.

   b) Football coaches of complete country teams to be selected by country managers.

   c) **Mixed Regional Teams:**
   ON TIME TITANS: Reunion/Mayotte, Mali, Benin, Togo, Guinea, Guinea Bissau
   CAN DO ROCKETS: Madagascar, Congo, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad
   SPEED SQUAD: Zambia, Zimbabwe, The Gambia, Liberia, Equatorial Guinea, CAR, Cape Verde
   PASSION RANGERS: Namibia, Botswana, Malawi, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Swaziland

   The maximum players per team is sixteen (16), plus one coach – seventeen (17) in total. Africa Cup HQ will notify countries as to how many players they will be able to field to make up one of the regional teams. Numbers are worked out on a percentage of employees per region.

   d) Mixed regional team coaches will be appointed one per region by the AMB.

   All games will be played according to FIFA rules, unless otherwise stated.

2. All games must be played in a sportsman-like manner. Respect must be shown to all referees and opponents.
3. All players must work for DHL Express and should have been on the payroll **as of 17 April 2025**, working at least 20 hours per week. Temps, graduates, and 3rd-party suppliers cannot take part. Teams will be disqualified if any team member does not comply with this rule.
4. A football team may consist of either gender. Keep in mind that there is only one competition level, so players should be of the highest caliber possible.

5. Each team must register their players' names **by 19Janaury 2026**.

   Mixed Regional Team Coaches will be appointed one per region by the AMB.

   Every team member has to be approved by the Country Manager and the HR Manager, please do not leave any department in your Country short of staff. Tournament Registration will be open **from 1 December 2026** and can be found on dhlafricacup.com

6. Any unregistered player must be pre-approved by the respective Country Coach, Country Manager, HR Head

7. Each player may only represent the team for which he/she has been registered throughout the tournament.

8. A minimum of seven players will be required to start the game. Matches starting late will be shortened at the referee's discretion.

9. Teams not available for kick off five minutes after the appointed time will lose the game; the other team will claim 3 points. The score will be 3-0.

10. Teams not appearing on time or incomplete teams will be disqualified from the following year's tournament.

11. There will be 3 points for a win and 1 for a draw.

12. Each game will consist of 2 halves of 15 minutes each, with 2 minutes rest at half time.

13. A player receives a warning when given a yellow card. The second yellow card during the same game will equal a red card, which means that a player will be sent off for the rest of the game. A player receiving a red card will be sent off for the duration of that particular game. A player who is sent off twice during the tournament will be banned from the rest of the tournament.

15. The competition shall be played in a group stage with a maximum of 4 groups, followed by a knock-out stage. From the group games, 16 teams will go to the second stage. From each group, the teams placed first and second will go through automatically. The ranking of each team in each group shall be determined as follows:

    a) Greatest number of points obtained in all group matches

    b) Goal difference in all group matches

    c) Greatest number of goals scored in all group matches If more than two teams are equal on the basis of the above three criteria, their rankings shall be determined by Head-To-Head result. If the match between the two teams ends in a draw, then penalty shoot-outs will take place.

    d) If there are less than 8 groups (depending on the total participating teams), the best teams who finished third in their group (refer to paragraph 15 for the ranking), will also go to the second round until 16 teams are nominated. If in this case more than one team with the same result as per paragraph 16 are in concurrence for the last nomination for the second round, then penalty shoot-outs will determine the last nomination.

16. If more than two teams are equal on the basis of the above three criteria, their rankings shall be determined by Head-To-Head result. If the match between the two teams ends in a draw, number of red cards will be referees too, the team with the least number of red cards will progress. In the event of this being equal, yellow cards will be referred too, the team with the least number of yellow cards will progress. In the event of this being equal, a penalty shoot-out will determine who progresses.

17. The winners of each game in the second round (last 16, quarter/ semi-final) will proceed on a straight knock-out basis to the final. Should there be a draw at full-time, whether goalless or a draw, then a penalty shoot-out will take place. Penalty shoot-outs will be according to FIFA regulations. The goal keeper that ends the game after 2 x 15 minutes will also be required to be the goal keeper for the penalty shoot-out.

18. Semi-final and Final matches: a) Should there be a draw at full-time, whether goalless or a draw, the game goes into extra time of 5 minutes each way (total 10 minutes further play).

    b) Should there still be a goalless draw at the end of extra time, then penalty shoot-outs will take place, 5 penalties each team. If there is still a draw – Sudden Death!

19. The referee's decision is final.

20. Wearing shin guards during matches is mandatory.

21. Should one team withdraw within 7 days of the competition, then the Organising Steering Committee, at their discretion, will re-allocate the number of teams in the individual pools. The decision of the Committee is final.

22. The Organising Steering Committee will decide what to do when a game is stopped for any reason, and will decide on any other issue not covered by these rules and regulations.

23. These rules are subject to review and can be adjusted at any time. Any new versions automatically replace this version.