The Confederation of African Cycling (ACEA) will return to Kigali on November 29 2025 for its second Continental Excellence Awards, and this choice of venue is not coincidence. It is a celebration of outstanding performers, the awards mark another step in Africa's growing to define its own cycling future.

Kigal, which hosted the 2025 UCI Road World Championships ever held on African soil, has quickly become a nerve center for the sport. By bringing the ACEA Awards back here (Kigali), organizers are highlighting Rwanda's emergence not just as a host, but as a central hub for African cycling.

Who's Likely to Win — And Why

To understand who might take home top honours, we need to look beyond names, to performance, infrastructure, and strategy.

Men's Elite:

Eritrea remains the standout cycling nation in Africa. Its riders are consistently among the top in UCI Africa-Tour rankings, and several of its elite cyclists are now signed to professional teams abroad.

Biniam Girmay is one of the continent's most prominent names, with UCI results that have made him a benchmark for African elite racing.

Natnael Tesfatsion, another top Eritrean, has also earned strong UCI points and has proven he can perform on the big stage. Given his form and UCI ranking, Reinardt Janse van Rensburg (South Africa), Youcef Reguigui and Islam Mansouri (Algeria) are the other highest ProcyCyclingStats ranked nominee riders on the ACEA list..

Women's Elite: Rwanda's Spotlight

One of the most striking features of this year's ACEA female nominees is who is not there. Kim Le Court, arguably Africa's most accomplished women cyclist in recent years, does not appear on the list. She has competed internationally, amassed UCI points, and remains a leading figure in African women's cycling.

Her absence suggests a few things, a home-nation emphasis:. All eight of the Women Elite nominees are Rwandan. With the Awards in Kigali, there may be an intentional focus on promoting local talent.

Secondly, African women's cycling still lacks a fully developed UCI continental tour. Many top women, including Le Court, race primarily in Europe and on UCI Women's teams, which may put them outside the standard continental nomination framework.

With the Awards in Kigali, there may be an intentional focus on promoting local talent in this field, Ingabire Diane and Xaverine Nirere are the highest PCS-ranked nominee in this category.

Rising Talent

The amateur category brings together some of the continent's brightest emerging cyclists. Countries such as Algeria and Ivory Coast, which have quietly expanded their grassroots programs, are beginning to see their efforts reflected in UCI-tracked performances.

Among this year's nominees, Andé Kouadid Emmanuel of Algeria stands out. His inclusion signals the growing depth in Algerian cycling, and his recent showings in regional competitions suggest he could be the one to watch in this category.

National Teams:

When it comes to national squads, depth and consistency often make the difference. Eritrea, long a powerhouse on the African cycling scene, remains the team with the strongest claim. With a cluster of elite riders performing well in UCI Africa Tour rankings, Eritrea's momentum continues to separate it from the rest.

For Rwanda, hosting both the UCI Road World Championships and the ACEA Awards in the same year marks an important moment. Kigali has steadily built its reputation as a dependable cycling host city, and its growing presence on the international calendar speaks to how far the sport has come in the country.

Eritrea's dominance is still evident, but Algeria and other fast-improving nations are narrowing the gap. Yet the women's field tells a different story. Kim Le Court, Africa's highest-ranked female rider, is absent from this year's elite nominations.

Although Kim Le Court is absent from the Women's Elite shortlist, she does appear, alongside Lucie de Marigny-Lagesse of Mauritius, in the national teams category.

Her omission from the elite field highlights a familiar challenge: Africa's strongest

female riders often spend most of the year competing abroad, making it harder for local award systems to align with their international calendars.

Given the current nominations, neither Le Court nor Lagesse is eligible for the Women's Elite Award, as that category is composed solely of Rwandan riders this year. As a result, it is unlikely that either of them will take the elite women's title. Instead, their chances lie in the National Teams category, where their experience, including Lagesse's recent stage victory at the Pupkewitz Megabuild Windhoek Women's Tour, positions Mauritius as a strong contender.

Across the amateur and elite levels, however, one trend is clear: African cycling is expanding its base. The ACEA Awards will hand out trophies, but their real weight is symbolic. African cycling is no longer waiting for global platforms to define its worth. It is building its own systems, telling its own stories, and celebrating its own stars, on home ground.

List of nominees and category

Men Elite Candidates

Algeria: Amari Hamza, Assal Nadjib, Hamza Yacine, Mansouri Islam, Lagab Azzedine, Mansouri Islam, Reguigui Youceff

South Africa: De Bod Stefan, Munton Byron, Daumont Paul

Mauritius: Mayer Alexandre, Aurelien de Comarmond

Eritrea: Girmay Biniam, Maekele Milkiyas, Mulubrhan Henok, Tesfazion Natnae, Zeray Nahom,

Cameroon: Kamzong Clovis, Tientches Michel Bors,

Morocco: Sabbahi El Houcaine, ***Driss El Alouani***

Women Elite Candidates (All from Rwanda)

– Ingabire Diane

– Irakoze Neza Violette

– Liliane Uwiringiyimana

– Mwamikazi Jazilla

– Nirere Xaveline

– Ntakirutimana Martha

– Nyirarukundo Claudette

– Yvonne Masengesho

Amateurs Candidates

Algeria: Assal Nadjib

Mali: Diallo Tiemoko, Diallo Yaya, Diemoutene Tiemoko, Diarra Siriki,

South Africa: Reinardt Janse van Rensburg, Samuel Guevauvilleis, Kieck Blaine

Ivory Coast: Kouadio Emmanuel, Andé, Isiaka Cissé, Kamzong Clovis

Burkina Faso: Rassid Bouda, Moucaila Rawende, Ilbdudo Soumlia, Daumout Paul

Cameroon: Michel Boris Tientcheu, Nguegium Steven Auriol

National Teams Candidates

Algeria: Nadjib Assal, Ecaila Rawende

Cameroon: Michel Boris Tientcheu, Steve Ngueguim

Mali: Yaya Diallo, Tiemoko Diamoutene, Tiemoko Diallo, Siriki Diarra

Mauritius: Kim Le Court, Alexandre Mayer, Lucie De Marigny-Lagesse

Eritrea: Henok Mulubrhan, Nahom Zeray, Amanuel Ghebreigzabhier

Rwanda: Vainqueur Masengesho, Moise Mugisha

Ivory Coast: Kouadio Emmanuel Andé, Isiaka Cissé

Burkina Faso: Rassid Bouda, Moucaila Rawende