

## Newsletter – February 2026



February was a busy month for league operations, registrations, and planning. As we wrap up the APCL Fall Blast and launch the Spring Blast season, HCCA remains focused on our mission: promoting cricket and building community across Central Texas.

### February by the Numbers

February brought finals, kickoffs, and continued Board effort. Here's a snapshot of the month.

**12–15**

Board meetings

**400+**

Volunteer hours

**2**

Finals (Elite & Plate)

**Feb 28**

Spring Blast kickoff

**305**

Membership registrations (Feb, under 2 weeks)

**Focus areas:** Fall Blast finals, Spring Blast schedule, youth program meetings and rollout, **305 membership registrations** processed in under two weeks in February, umpiring clinics, Hutto ground maintenance, and HCCA History series launch.

## APCL Fall Blast 2025 – Season Wrap-Up and Finals

The APCL Fall Blast 2025 season concluded with two thrilling finals. We celebrate the champions and thank every captain, umpire, and volunteer who made the competition possible.

### Elite Division Final (Feb 21, 2026)

In a closely contested match, **Smashers** faced **Dare Devils**. Dare Devils posted 175/7 in 20 overs. Smashers chased it down with 177/3 in 18.4 overs, winning by 7 wickets. **Harsha Rentala** was named Player of the Match. Congratulations to Smashers – Elite Division Champions!

### Plate Division Final (Feb 15, 2026)

**Austin Challengers** met **Thunders** in the Plate finale. Thunders scored 138/10 in 19.1 overs. Austin Challengers reached 139/6 in 16 overs, securing the title by 4 wickets. **Karan J** earned Player of the Match honors. Congratulations to Austin Challengers – Plate Division Champions!

### Champions and runners-up



Elite champions — Smashers



Elite runners-up — Dare Devils



Plate champions — Austin Challengers



Plate runners-up — Thunders

## Families at the Fall Blast awards

Award night brought together players, parents, and kids—moments that show how HCCA builds community and celebrates culture on and off the field.



Award function — families



Parents and youth at awards



Community at the awards

Also see match-day community photos in our Fall Blast 2025 gallery.

More photos: [Fall Blast 2025 awards](#) · [Fall Blast 2025 gallery](#)

Thank you to all teams for an outstanding season of competitive, sportsmanlike cricket.

## 2026 Membership Registrations – In Full Swing

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In less than two weeks in February, **305 membership registrations** were processed and added to **2026 team rosters** in time for the **2026 season kickoff**.

Behind the scenes, the Board continues payment confirmations, email inquiries, and reconciliations. If you have questions about registration status or payment, please check the website or reach out to the Board — we are here to help.

## APCL Spring Blast 2026 – Kickoff and Schedule

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The 2026 APCL Spring Blast officially kicked off in February. Captains met to finalize the schedule and align on format and rules.

The first game of the season was played on **February 28**. March will bring more matches and exciting cricket across both divisions. We look forward to another competitive season.

## Umpiring Registrations and Clinics

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Umpires are essential for fair, high-quality cricket. Umpire registrations and clinics are underway for the Spring Blast season.

If you are interested in becoming an umpire or sharpening your skills, we encourage you to participate. Details are available on the website and through Board communications.

## Youth Program Updates

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The Youth Program has kicked off with strong momentum. Several meetings have taken place among parents, coaches, and the Board to align on structure, expectations, and goals for the season.

### Collaboration & Alignment

Parent-coach-Board meetings have helped streamline the program. Key

### Schedule & Practice Games

The Youth Program calendar has been streamlined with a clear

topics include session schedules, age-group organization, and coaching curriculum. This collaboration ensures a consistent, high-quality experience for our young cricketers.

schedule and structured practice games. Youth sessions and intra-squad matches are now in place, giving players opportunities to develop skills and enjoy competitive cricket in a supportive setting.

Thank you to all parents, coaches, and volunteers who are making the Youth Program a success.

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## Facilities Update – Hutto Ground Maintenance

Ground work is planned at the Hutto Cricket Ground for March. Soil and sod will be added on the leg side to cover stones and improve playing conditions and player safety.

Thank you to the grounds team and volunteers for their commitment to maintaining HCCA's facilities. Quality grounds are central to our mission.

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## Board of Directors – Behind the Scenes

The volunteer Board has invested significant time in February. Over **12–15 meetings** and **400+ collective hours** have gone into registrations, league planning, youth programs, finances, and governance.

We appreciate every hour our Board members donate to serve the HCCA community.

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## HCCA History – Part 1: Where Passion Built a Dream

Every great institution has an origin story. HCCA began with fifteen people jumping over a locked fence on a hot Texas weekend in 1997, determined to play the game they loved.

In 1997, the Round Rock High School football field sat behind padlocked gates on weekends. A small group of cricket enthusiasts found each other through word of mouth. They scaled the fence, passed their kits over, and played—even though there weren't enough for two full teams. Batting pairs were numbered so everyone could bat, bowl, and field. The grass was tall, there were no boundaries or sightscreens, and

summers reached 110 degrees while winters dipped to 50. They played anyway, keeping alive a sport that carried memories of home and identity in a new land.

By 1998, the group wanted legitimacy. They approached the middle school principal, offered to maintain the field, and made a donation to the school library. The principal said yes. Word spread; the group grew to twenty-five. Weekend matches became community events. Families came. The cricket circle expanded.

Having a field was one thing; having a cricket ground was another. A road construction crew working nearby was hired to excavate 15 yards and fill it with limestone. All fifteen members took turns rolling it over the weekends until it was solid and playable. Play continued, and a few weeks later they purchased their first cricket mat—unrolled before each match, stored like treasure afterward. Through communal effort, they transformed an open field into a functional cricket ground.

**Shafi, Shakir, Palinda, Shyam, and Sanjay Saxena** were among the original fence-jumpers. **John, Ashish, Amit, Sanjay Singh, Hemant, and Mike** joined as the vision expanded—diplomats and organizers who talked to administrators, coordinated with crews, and managed a growing player base. These pioneers didn't wait for perfect conditions; they created them.

*When you play at an HCCA facility today, remember: someone once jumped a fence so you could walk through a gate. Someone once rolled limestone by hand so you could play on turf.*

**Part 2 coming next:** How did this informal group become an official organization? Who signed the founding papers? How did they grow from one field to multiple grounds? The story continues.

## Closing Note

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Thank you to all members, families, and volunteers for your support. March will bring more matches, youth activities, and ground improvements. We look forward to sharing **HCCA History – Part 2** in the next newsletter.

*From 15 players jumping fences in 1997 to 500+ members today — cricket continues to bring our community together.*

## **Warm regards,**

HCCA Board of Directors 2026–2027

- President — Siva Busa
- Secretary — Balaji Vrk
- Treasurer — Praveen Nuthulapati
- Infrastructure — Hemant Thakkar
- Youth Play (YPD) — V. Harikishan Puvvala
- League Play (LPD) — Yogi Ram
- Communication — Sandeep Belkhode

## **Contact Us**

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**Email:** [contact@hccacricknet.org](mailto:contact@hccacricknet.org)

**Board:** [hcca\\_bod@googlegroups.com](mailto:hcca_bod@googlegroups.com)

**Website:** [www.hccacricknet.org](http://www.hccacricknet.org)

## **About HCCA**

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Hill Country Cricket Association (HCCA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving Central Texas since 2002, with 500+ members across Austin, Round Rock, Cedar Park, and Leander.

### **Our Mission:**

*"Promote humanistic values by celebrating and commemorating cultural diversity that exists in people of different backgrounds brought together by the sport of cricket."*