

Frequently Asked Questions by Host Families

Finding families willing to host our players is in some ways as important as finding the players themselves. The role of a host family is critical. Here are some frequently asked questions we have answered over the years.

In what League does the Big Train play?

According to Baseballobserver.com, as of February 2023, there are [88 summer collegiate baseball leagues](#). The Bethesda Big Train plays in the [Cal Ripken Senior Collegiate Baseball League](#). Other Cal Ripken teams include the Alexandria Aces, Olney Cropdusters, D.C. Grays, Gaithersburg Giants, Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts, South County Braves, and Southern Maryland Senators.

Can you explain the structure of Big Train's Host Family Program?

Big Train has two volunteer Host Family Coordinators who manage the Program and work very closely with the Head Coach, General Manager and Board. Coordinators are responsible for the recruitment of host families; player/host family placements; communicating with players and host families; and are available throughout the summer to answer questions, address any concerns and to simply be a main point of contact for all players and host families.

What are the dates in which you need Host Families?

In 2023, players are expected to arrive around May 30th – playoffs are July 22nd through July 31st. However, the timing is a little different each year, but players generally arrive in late May and stay through the end of July (after playoffs).

So, my player(s) will arrive on May 30th and go home after July 31st?

It is important to let Host Families know that player schedules vary considerably. While May 30th is likely the earliest a player will arrive, and August 1st is likely the latest a player will stay – there are many reasons that players will arrive later and leave earlier. Some players might play for a college or university that makes it to the playoffs, thus extending their college season well into June. Others might get injured during the summer and need to go home. Their college coach might want them back early for several different reasons. We understand that this might be disappointing for Host Families, but please be aware that fluctuations do occur.

Are Host Families compensated?

The Bethesda Community Base Ball Club, Inc. (BCBBC) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity as determined by the IRS, and stewards of the Big Train summer collegiate team. This non-profit, volunteer-based organization relies on the generosity of host families every summer. BCBBC does not have the funding to be able to compensate our Host Families. Host families are offered season tickets for all regular season home games they will be attending at Povich Field.

How far away can a host family live?

Ideally, we would like our Host Families to live within a 20 to 25 minute or less commute to Povich.

What are Host Families expected to provide the player?

As a Host Family, it is your job to help make the players transition to a new environment and community easier. Most are new to the area and may need help with directions, finding restaurants and stores, and local amenities. Keep in mind they are college students between the ages of 18-22 still learning to adjust without their mother and/or father. You will help bridge that gap.

Housing:

You will provide your player(s) with a stable, clean, and healthy environment for the duration of their time with the Bethesda Big Train. Many Big Train players work (often at Big Train camp) during the day and play games at night. Therefore, their needs are relatively simple:

- a private room with a door (room may be shared with another player);
- bedding and linens (fresh sheets; blankets; and towels);
- access to a bathroom (players will be showering late at night after games);
- access to a kitchen;
- access to a washing machine and dryer;
- access to internet/wifi;
- breakfast food in the morning;
- a place to park a car;
- and a family to cheer them on.

Meals:

At a minimum, Host families should have items and/or ingredients in the house for players to make their own breakfast. Outside of breakfast, players are responsible for their own meals, drinks, and snacks. Big Train does provide meals before all home and away games. Host Families are always welcome to provide more; some families ask their player for weekly grocery lists; include them when ordering in; or make extra at dinnertime so their player(s) can have leftovers when they get home at night. We realize that shopping for and feeding college-age young men is expensive so families should only do what is in their financial comfort zone.

Can I host more than one player?

Yes, of course! If you have the space, hosting an additional player or two is ideal for the players. When we can, we will pair up players from the same school; pitchers; field players; those who already know each other or pair a player who is bring a car with a player who is not.

When will we get the name and contact information of the player(s) we are hosting?

Host Family Coordinators will send out player/host family matches in mid-May. Placements will be communicated directly to player and host families via email. You will receive a

Google Sheet that includes a list of all players with their host family placements along with contact information (addresses; phone numbers; emails; maps) for everyone.

Do I need to reach out to my Player?

Once you receive the email with player/Host Family placements please make every effort contact your player. Introduce yourself and your family. Make sure you ask about his timeline and schedule for arrival. Because there can be several variables in play with respect to your responsibilities with work and/or kids, so please make sure to keep the lines of communication open with your player(s). We know you want to be there to welcome them, and the more information you have the better you can plan. Keep in mind that these are young men between 18 and 21 and some may be better at communicating than others. If you have trouble getting a response, please let the Host Family Coordinators know – they can help facilitate.

Will my player(s) have a car? If not, will we be expected to drive him places?

We do not expect host families to drive players around. Players will provide their own transportation. Approximately two-thirds of the players bring their own car. Players who do not have cars are strategically housed close to players who do have cars. Teammates are responsible for giving each other rides to and from games or anywhere else they need to go.

We would like to host a player but are going on vacation for two weeks in July. Can we still participate?

Yes, it's possible. While we prefer not moving players once they have settled in with a family, if you will be out of town, for any reason, during June and July, please contact the Big Train Host Family Coordinators to discuss your specific situation. They can work to relocate your player while you are away. In the past we have had host families who were comfortable letting the player(s) stay in their home while they are away, and others who were not. If we know in advance that you do not want player in your home while you are away, we can plan ahead. There are times when host families are going on vacation at separate times, and they share a player.

How are players matched with Host Families?

Host family coordinators take a lot into consideration when placing players with families. In the spring, host families are asked to complete a Host Family Profile with numerous questions about pets; allergies; schedules; children; space; dietary restrictions; etc. Players are also asked several questions like if they prefer to live with a teammate; have allergies; ok with children; work; etc. Also entering into the equation are factors such if a player is bringing a car and what position he plays (pitchers and position players sometimes have different needs). We try to place a player with a car at each home or nearby others so that every player has a ride to the field.

My son is a catcher. We would love to have a catcher stay with us. Is it possible to request a certain position player?

Because of the sometimes-complicated logistics of placing players with allergies into pet-

free families, locating players with and without cars close to each other, and placing returning players with their old families, it is not always possible to honor these types of requests. We will do our best to make it happen if possible.

We have three cats. Do you make sure that players don't have pet allergies?

When you decide to host a player(s), you will be asked to complete a Host Family Profile where we ask many questions about your home and family, including whether or not you have pets. Players also complete a profile and are asked about allergies. Host Family Coordinators take all the answers from Host Families and Players to make the best possible matches. We will not place a player in your home if he is allergic to cats.

What is a player's daily itinerary or schedule like?

Big Train plays an approximately [40-game regular season](#) in two months; additional games for teams who make it to the playoffs. So, players have very busy schedules with 5-7 games per week. They have 5 off days in June and 3 to 5 days off in July. For home games that begin at 7 p.m., they'll be expected at the field around 4pm for warm-ups, batting practice and dinner. Players may leave as early as 2 p.m. for away games. Please be aware that players return home from games between 10:30 p.m. and midnight and will likely shower when they get home.

What about during the day or on off days?

Many players work half days at Big Train summer camp during the week. Few may have an internship or other part-time job – but they are all here to focus on their game. Most players do work out on a regular basis. Regardless of their daytime activities, host families should expect players to come and go often. Players will also sleep in if their schedules allow, so your family will likely be up and out the door before your player even gets up...and he may be gone for that evening's game before you return.

There are very few off days. Players may spend off days together sightseeing; hanging out; playing golf or just simply enjoying some quiet, alone time. Players will also participate in local charity/volunteer work while they are here.

I heard Big Train is traveling to north this summer?

This summer, for the first time ever, Big Train is taking a road trip in early July to New England to play two games against teams in the New England Collegiate Baseball League (NECBL). Big Train will play the Martha's Vineyard Sharks on July 3rd and the Newport Gulls on July 4th before heading home on July 5th. Although details and logistics are still being finalized, Host Families and fans alike will be able to travel with the team. Additional information, including costs, is coming soon.

I'm really hoping that we can host a player who will help our son with his baseball skills or spend time hanging out with our family. Is this possible?

Your player and your child(ren) could certainly have that kind of relationship. All host family situations are unique, and players have different personalities – some may not interact as much with their host family as others do. Although there are very few off-days,

there will be opportunities to get to know your player and develop lasting memories. Families are more than welcome to plan activities with their players if they wish.

What happens if there's a problem with the placement?

Players are recruited through their college baseball coaches, and all of them are expected to maintain impeccable moral standards, abide by NCAA guidelines, and be a role model to our fans. If any player's actions, on or off the field, are not in line with these standards, we may ask them to return home. Big Train players appreciate host families' hospitality and understand that it is privilege to live in as guests in your home. If there is a minor problem, we ask that you contact a host family coordinator, who will work to try to resolve it with the player. If the problem is major, we will remove him immediately. On the other hand, there have been a few rare and extenuating circumstances where we have had to remove a player because he was not comfortable with the Host Family. We believe that living in a family's home is a privilege the players should respect and appreciate.

What rules are there about drinking and using drugs?

Providing a safe, family environment both on and off the field is our priority. Any drug use, unless prescribed, is not tolerated. Under no circumstances may a Host Family provide alcohol to a Big Train player (regardless of age) or willingly host a party in which they know alcohol is being served. If either occurs, players may be immediately removed, and the Host Family will not be invited to host players in the future.

At the beginning of the season, we will provide host families and players with guidelines and a sample contract that can be used at the discretion of the Host Family. The contract can also serve as forum for families and players to openly and honestly discuss any household rules/expectations.