

Player Frequently Asked Questions about Host Families

Host families are a vital part of the Big Train's success both on and off the field. We ask that you appreciate host families' hospitality and understand that it is privilege to live as guests in their home. Here are some frequently asked questions we have answered for players over the years.

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 players and host families.

Do Host Family Coordinators reach out to my parents?

Host Family Coordinators are here to help ensure a positive housing experience during your summer in Bethesda. They will be corresponding directly with you. They will also be corresponding directly with Host Families. Host Family Coordinators will not be talking to your parents. You are responsible for keeping them in the loop. Please refrain from asking your parents to reach out on your behalf – to Host Family Coordinators or to Host Families. If you have any questions or concerns it is our expectation that you, personally, will contact a Host Family Coordinator.

When will I find out who my Host Family is?

Host Family Coordinators will send out player/host family matches in mid-May. Placements will be communicated directly to players via email (to the email we have on file for you). 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). Your parents will not be receiving this email, but you can share with them if you want.

Do I need to reach out to my Host Family?

Once you receive the email with player/Host Family placements please make every effort contact your Host Family. Introduce yourself and let them know what your plans are for arrival. Host Families are planning for your arrival by getting your room ready and making sure you have what you need to comfortably move in, however your host parents likely have full time jobs and, in many cases, children who are still in school. Because there can be several variables in play with respect to your arrival plans, please keep the lines of communication open with your Host Family. We know they want to be there to welcome you, and the more information they have from you the better able they will be to plan accordingly.

What are Host Families expected to provide players?

Your host family will help you adjust to moving to a new area, assist as you get acquainted with the community, and provide a safe and stable living environment as your "home away

from home” this summer.

Housing:

Host Families will provide you with a stable, clean, and healthy environment during your time with the Bethesda Big Train to include:

- 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;
- access to a kitchen;
- access to a washing machine and dryer;
- access to internet/Wi-Fi;
- breakfast food in the morning;
- a place to park a car;
- and a family to cheer you on.

Meals:

At a minimum, Host families should have items and/or ingredients in the house so you can make your own breakfast. Outside of breakfast, you are responsible for your 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 may ask for your weekly grocery list; include you when ordering in; or make extra at dinnertime so you can have leftovers when you get home at night. Outside of breakfast, families are told to only provide what is in their financial comfort zone.

How are players matched with Host Families?

Players, like Host Families are taking a leap of faith: you are trusting them, and they are trusting you. 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; are ok with children; work; etc. Also entering the equation are factors such as if a player is bringing a car and what position he plays. 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.

I will not have a car. How do I get to/from the field; games; grocery store; etc.?

Host Family Coordinators try to place at least one player with a car at each home or near others so that every player has a ride to the field. The coaches will discuss expectations about carpooling at your first meeting, but players with cars will be responsible for ensuring players without cars have rides as needed. As a courtesy, you can offer to help pay for your teammate’s gas. Host Families are not responsible for driving you places but may offer if or when their schedule allows.

Am I permitted to hang out with my Host Family?

Absolutely! Your Host Family is so excited to have you, but they also understand that you have

a busy summer schedule with very few off days. Big Train encourages players to spend time with their Host Families and especially with families who have kids. Something as small as a game of catch; a quick debrief when you get home after a game; or a quick hello at Povich field during a game will really mean a lot!

Can I switch Host Families?

We do not allow players to independently switch host families when they arrive or anytime throughout the season. Host Family Coordinators spend many hours matching players with families, and there are multiple factors taken into consideration when making placements: allergies; pets; cars; location of the home; delayed player arrivals; player requests; host family requests (i.e., hosting a player they previously hosted). Most of our host families have hosted players in the past and we have gotten to know them over the years. Coordinators will also seek input from coaches re player personalities and general thoughts about player/family compatibility.

In addition to the careful consideration that goes into player placements, Host Families are so, so excited to have you. Matches go out to players and families in mid-May and families will start preparing for your arrival. It can be a very heartbreaking experience for families if a player wants to leave.

What happens if a problem arises with my Host Family?

We are happy to say that the overwhelming majority of our players have been thrilled with their host family experience and have created bonds and friendships that extend well beyond their summers with Big Train. While our Host Family Coordinators do everything they can to ensure a wonderful experience, sometimes there are situations beyond our control. If you find yourself in a situation that needs addressed, please bring it to the attention to our Host Family Coordinators and the General Manager immediately. Host Family coordinators will first try to mitigate the issue. Under extenuating circumstances, we will transfer you to another family.

What rules are there about drinking and using drugs?

Providing a safe environment both on and off the field is our priority. Any drug use, unless prescribed, is not tolerated. Under no circumstances may a player under 21 years old consume alcohol. If you are of legal drinking age, please talk to your Big Train coaches about team expectations as well as your Host Family re house rules on alcohol consumption. Please keep in mind that you are representing your college/university, the Big Train and are a role model to the young boys and girls who come to watch you play.