

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 2025, there are [85 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, Metro South County Braves, and Southern Maryland Senators.

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

Big Train has one Host Family Coordinator who manages the Program and works closely with the Head Coach, General Manager, Director of Operations, and members of the Board. The Host Family Coordinator is responsible for the recruitment of host families; player/host family placements; communicating with players and host families; and is available throughout the summer to answer questions, address any concerns, and to be a main point of contact for all players and host families.

What are the dates you need Host Families?

In 2026, player report day is May 27th. Most players will be arriving in Bethesda between May 26th and May 29th. The season ends on Sunday, July 19th. Playoffs begin Thursday, July 23rd through July 31st.

So, my player(s) will arrive on May 26th and go home after July 31st?

Player schedules vary considerably. While May 26th is probably the earliest a player will arrive, and August 1st is likely the latest a player will stay, there are many reasons that a player's arrival could be delayed and many reasons that a player will leave before the end of the season. Some 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 and need to go home early. Some players could be in the [college transfer portal](#) (looking for a new school for fall) or their college coach might want to shut them down for a variety of reasons. We understand that this might be disappointing for Host Families, but please be prepared – fluctuations often occur. Sometimes we even get a player or two mid-summer season and need to find a host family for them.

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 Bethesda Big Train summer collegiate team. As a non-profit organization, Big Train is volunteer-based and relies on the generosity of host families (and others) every summer. BCBBC does not have the funding to compensate our Host Families. Host families will be provided tickets, free of charge, to any

or all regular season home games.

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 Shirley Povich Field.

What are Host Families expected to provide the player?

As a Host Family, it is your job to help make the player(s) 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 player 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 carryout; or make extra food 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. There is definitely a sense of comfort for players when they have a teammate with them. 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 will have a car with a player who does not.

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

The Host Family Coordinator will send out player/host family matches in mid-May. Placements will be communicated directly to players 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?

YES!!! Once you receive the email with player/Host Family placements please make it a priority to contact your player. Introduce yourself and your family – zoom calls are great! Make sure you ask about his timeline and schedule for arrival. Because there can be several variables in play - work and/or kids - 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 22 and some may be better at communicating and providing details than others. If you have trouble getting a response, please let the Host Family Coordinator know – she can help facilitate. It has been our experience that texting results in a quicker response.

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 half or more bring their own car. Players who do not have cars are strategically housed close to players who do have cars or closest to Povich Field. Teammates are responsible for giving each other rides to and from games or anywhere else they need to go. Coaches will reiterate this during the meet and greet on 5/28.

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 or July) please contact the Big Train Host Family Coordinator to discuss your specific situation. She can work to relocate your player while you are away. We always tell players that they will be moved while their host family is on vacation. If we know in advance, we can plan ahead.

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 and players are asked to complete a questionnaire. We 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; having a vehicle; delayed player arrivals; player requests; host family requests (i.e., hosting a player they previously hosted). The Host Family Coordinator will also seek input from coaches re player personalities and general thoughts about player/family compatibility. A player's position is also considered (pitchers and position players sometimes have different needs). We try to place a player with a car at each home or near teammates, so every player has a ride to and from 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 Questionnaire 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. The Host Family Coordinator reviews 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 approximately 40-games during the regular season June and July – with additional games for teams who make it to and through the playoffs. Players have very busy schedules with 5-7 games per week. They have very few days off. For [home games](#) that begin at 7 p.m., players are expected at the field around 4pm for warm-ups, batting practice and dinner. They 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 and sleep in in the morning.

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 baseball. Most players work out on a regular basis - Big Train partners with a local gym for players to use free of charge. Regardless of player daytime activities, host families should expect them to come and go often. Players will also sleep in if their schedules allow, so your family may be up and out the door before he 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'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 very 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 role models. If a 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 a privilege to live as guests in your home. If there is a minor problem, we ask that you contact the host family coordinator first. 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 from their host families home. The coaches will reiterate on day 1 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 direct host families and players to guidelines and a sample contract that can be used at the discretion of the Host Family. The contract can also serve as a vehicle for families and players to openly and honestly discuss household rules/expectations.

I have more questions, who should I contact?

You can reach out to Host Family Coordinator, Amy Matush at amymatush76@gmail.com or Big Train General Manager, Sal Colangelo.