



"Billeting" is a hockey tradition and is especially important at the elite level of hockey. This concept involves local host families providing a home to out-of-state or out-of-country players for the hockey season. The billet program also allows these young men to complete their high school educations, take college preparatory classes and/or obtain part-time employment in the local community while pursuing the next step in their hockey careers.

Billet (Host) Families plays a major role in our team's success both on and off the ice. It takes special people to open their homes and hearts to our players and we take the utmost care to ensure our players are placed in environments that are conducive to care, understanding and safety. For many hockey parents, when their son joins a junior team, it marks the first time that he has left home. The Atlanta Junior Kings make every effort to ensure our players are in a suitable housing environment.

We ask that our players be treated like any other member of the billet family. It is important that the player respects the rules of his host family and the host family respects the rules of the hockey club. The values and principles for success that are essential to become a member of the Atlanta Junior Kings will be demanded at the rink, in the home, in the community and in school.

### **Common Questions**

#### **- What is a normal host family?**

There is no typical host family. A host family comes in many variations of families, including two-parent families, single-parent families and older couples with no children at home. All meet the minimum standard requirements, and must be able to provide a warm home and meals. Athletes are interested in a wide range of hosting situations. For example, some who come from large families would like to experience being the only child in a family.

#### **- Are Billet Families paid to host?**

Host families receive a monthly stipend of \$350 per player. Families will have the expense of food and housing, just as they would with any of their own teenager or young adult. Families are not responsible for the athlete's medical, education, or other incidental expenses.

#### **- I don't live near the rink. Can I still host?**

Host families live all over the Atlanta area. Counties include: Bartow, Cobb, Cherokee, Dekalb, Douglas, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett and Paulding. Your player will have to provide his own transportation. Players and billet families will work out specific details as pertains to their individual situations.

#### **- Can my own children benefit from hosting?**

Many athletes indicate an interest in being placed in families with small children. The influence of an athlete's dedication and training will have a positive impact on younger children. Their interest, curiosity and acceptance of people different from themselves is strongest at a young age. They will look up to the athlete and that bond ultimately forms a lifelong relationship.

#### **- We work full time, we wouldn't be home to entertain the athlete. Would this be a problem?**

The typical family where the husband works and the wife stays home is becoming a relic of yesterday. In most two-parent families, both parents work. The athlete's own day is busy filled with on ice and off ice training, work, school or community service projects.

### **What does the athlete expect?**

The athlete expects to be welcomed into a warm home. Flexibility, a sense of humor and the ability to help a young athlete adapt to a new family and lifestyle are also important qualities that athletes hope their host family will have. For many of these players this is their first time away from home. They come as faraway places like Canada, Denmark, Russia, California, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Florida etc. They need a "family situation" You become the surrogate parent they need.

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- **Can a family host more than one player?**

Yes. This is an ideal situation for both families and empty-nesters, again, the experience will establish a lifetime of memories and friendships. Two or more players can share transportation expenses, and often provide company for one another. The only requirement is that each player has adequate space/living arrangements. Each player is expected to have his own bed, a closet or dresser and acceptable access to a restroom. (If you have more than one player, it is ok to have them share a room with his teammate)

- **What happens if my family and athlete just don't get along?**

The team's coaches and billet coordinator are always prepared to assist with any problems that might arise. In the event of a serious problem or conflict of personalities, the team removes the athlete for evaluation to determine if the athlete should be replaced or even removed from the team. Communication is so important and usually helps deal with a situation before it's too late.

- **Can I choose the athlete(s) I would like to stay with us?**

Yes! If you have hosted a previous player or know a player made the roster you may request that player. I do my best to pair up players with host families taking into consideration life style, personalities, allergies etc. I have a player and a host questionnaire that helps guide me with the placements.

- **How long does a billet stay?**

Each player will arrive early to mid-August, a date dependent upon the preseason practice schedule. Players in high school may arrive at the start of school to register and may want to stay with the billet family until school ends in late May. Some decide to finish school back home. Players who are not in school will usually leave within a few days after the season ends. Our season ends early March, however playoffs continue for a month and they will need to stay till late March depending on our season record.

- **Will players join our family for personal events?**

You are welcome to invite players to join you for family celebrations or activities; however, it is not mandatory for you to do so. All players will have time off at the holidays in December to go home.

- **What happens if the Billet Family has to go out of town?**

Players will not be left alone without adult supervision overnight. If a Billet family has vacation plans that will result in an overnight absence, the Billet family will need to make alternate arrangements with another approved billet family until their return. Please inform the head coach and the Billet Coordinator of the temporary changes.

- **Will I have to pass a background check?**

Yes, the Atlanta Knights/USPHL is required to conduct background checks on all adults living in a Billet family home. The adults will be asked to fill out a Screening Release Form. The information is then compared with a government database to ensure that the players are placed in a safe environment. All information obtained during this process will remain strictly confidential between management and the adults within the Billet family home. No additional information or effort beyond completion of the Screening Release Form is required on the part of the Billet family to finalize the background check.

*Becoming a host family is not for everyone and families should not expect the athletes to be comfortable in an unstable situation. Host families should look at these athletes as an extension of their own family and not as a guest. The housing situation should be an enjoyable and positive experience for both the host family and the athlete.*

*Like any situation, boundaries and expectations need to be well established by the team and host family BEFORE the athlete moves in. It is important to remember that these athletes are going to look to the host parents to act as their own parents. Respect and consideration is the highest priority.*

**THE JUNIORS HAVE THEIR OWN LOCKER ROOM! THEIR EQUIPMENT STAYS AT THE RINK**

*If you have questions or need clarification, please e-mail the Knights Billet Coordinator - Carrie Uzzell at [info@atlantajrkings.com](mailto:info@atlantajrkings.com) or contact me at 636-248-2248.*

*Thank you for considering being a part of the Atlanta Junior Kings Hockey Organization!*