

# Thinking on Her Feet

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Elise Beattie '14, Photo by Gregory Greene

All student-athletes learn to balance the dual demands of academics and competition, but few do it in as dramatic fashion as Elise Beattie '14 did earlier this year.

A nursing major and a distance runner, Beattie had two major commitments on February 11—an all-day clinical experience in Rochester, N.H., and the first day of the America East Championships in Boston. Faced with the unhappy prospect of missing

one obligation or another, Beattie discovered that her event, the 5k race, did not go off until 6 p.m. So she got up at 5:30 a.m., worked at Frisbie Hospital from 7 to 3, hitched a ride with track and field volunteer assistant Shawn Green, and arrived at the meet with less than an hour to warm up and race—not in her scrubs, but just barely.

“That, to a T, is just who Elise is,” says women’s Head Track and Field Coach Rob Hoppler. “Where lots of other people say, ‘I can’t do both!’ that’s not in her vocabulary. I’m pretty sure she was the only runner who prepared for a championship race by putting in an eight-hour workday on her feet.”

The daughter of two NCAA Division I collegiate runners, Beattie always assumed she’d follow in her parents’ footsteps and at the same time earn a nursing degree. When it came time to consider colleges, however, the Woodstock, Ill., high school standout discovered that UNH was the only Division I program that would allow her to major in nursing and compete in track and field. “Coach Hoppler didn’t hesitate at all,” Beattie says. “That meant a lot to me. It was really important for me to go to college someplace where I didn’t have to make a choice between pursuing athletics and my future career.”

Beattie has wanted to be a nurse for as long as she can remember, though there’s no health care background in her family. “It just fits my personality,” she says. In keeping with the UNH nursing curriculum, she began clinical rotations in a variety of area hospitals as a sophomore, and now, as a junior, has eight-hour clinicals two days a week on top of her other classes and her track and field workouts. Her goal is to go into oncology nursing, probably somewhere back home in Illinois.

To accommodate the demands of Beattie’s schedule, Hoppler has designed individual workouts for the days her clinical obligations—which can require her to get up as early as 4:30 a.m.—interfere with team practices. That approach has clearly worked, as her 2012-13 winter indoor season included multiple first- and second-place individual performances and a new school record as part of the women’s indoor distance medley relay team.

And that America East Championship race Beattie rushed from Rochester to Boston to compete in on February 11— She finished second, setting a personal record of 17:15.

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