

Strange: U of L led at halftime

Continued from Page D 1

other locker room feels. Usually, halftime belongs to them. This time it belonged to us."

And so did the game. U of L approached the second half in a methodical, business-like manner and — with the exception of an 84-yard touchdown pass late in the third quarter — controlled the entire half.

But when Akron opened the game with a drive from its own 35 to the U of L 25 before missing a 41-yard field goal, Schnellenberger feared his team had come out flat.

It did take a quarter for the Cards to get untracked, and at least one player, halfback Deon Booker, admitted that he had problems getting excited about playing Akron (now 2-6) just a week after taking on fourth-ranked Florida State.

"It was kind of hard for me personally to really get up for this game after playing a top-ranked contender," Booker said. "I was in my own little world all week trying to get up."

Booker apparently had no trouble after the game started, though, rushing for 92 yards and two touchdowns in 18 carries and throwing a key block on fullback Craig Swabek's two-yard touchdown run.

Swabek and freshman Pete Bynm, who gained 54 yards in nine tries, played in place of regular Rodney Knighton, who suffered a knee injury just seven minutes into the game.

In fact, U of L was able to win handily even without two of the top performers from its skimpy senior class — Knighton and defensive tackle Chris Thieneman, who was dressed but didn't play because of a sprained ankle.

That left Harvey, offensive tackle Jim Nauert and punter Kirk Kennedy as the only other seniors who saw action.

U of L's defense allowed Akron to convert only two of 14 third-down plays and stopped the Zips without a first down on six series. Akron managed only 62 yards rushing.

"We made a couple of very terrible errors, and we started slowly and let them run through us and pass over us," Schnellenberger said. "But by and large, our defense played extremely well."

Meanwhile, quarterback Jay Gruden completed 24 of 41 passes for 357 yards, and U of L's running attack produced 176 yards.

"Obviously, Akron isn't as solid, developed and mature as Florida State or Southern Miss, so we didn't have to execute quite as well as we would have to beat those two," Schnellenberger said. "But we did some things extremely well. We got our running game back on track, and that helped a lot."

■ Akron coach Gerry Faust said he wasn't surprised when Schnellenberger accepted the difficult U of L rebuilding job in 1985.

"I think Louisville has a lot to offer," said Faust, who was stationed at Fort Knox for six months during Army duty. "It's a great sports community, and it's got great potential as a football school. If you give Howard time, he's going to have a good program, but you just don't build something overnight."

Chris Thieneman U of L Oct 26 1987

