

Keep your unlucky 13

REPORT

By Dave Peters

JINXED keeper Mark Westhead has had his plea to change his unlucky number 13 shirt turned down by the Football League.

They told him he is stuck with it all season and advised him to put a black cat in the dressing room instead to stop his bad luck.

The superstitious 24-year-old reserve glovesman has had three injuries since he was given the bewitched shirt in pre-season.

In his first match wearing it, he picked up a calf strain, then he suffered shin splints and finally, he was knocked out during the Aylesbury friendly by team-mate Mark Rogers and rushed to hospital.

Westhead said: "I've had enough of that number 13 shirt. It's brought me bad luck ever since I've had it."

Westie can't swap despite the bad omens

The league say goalkeepers must wear number one, 13 or 23. But Martin Taylor will not let go of his number one jersey and third choice Mark Osborn won't swap his 23.

Westhead said: "I don't want the shirt, but it looks as though I'm stuck with it. Ozzie doesn't want it and I wouldn't insult Martin by asking for his shirt."

Westhead was so worried by the curse that he stayed in all day on Friday the 13th.

He said: "I wasn't going to go out, not the way my luck's been going."

Westhead has been struck by the 13 hoodoo before. When he was at Bolton he came on as a sub wearing 13 and promptly broke a finger.

But he will have to grin and bear it.

A league spokesman said: "I've got some sympathy with him, but rules are rules and players can't change their registered numbers during the season. If you allowed players to change their numbers the whole system would break down. Maybe he should stick a black cat in the dressing room."

Westhead, whose landlady has got a black cat called Toots, said: "I can't believe they said that. But I'll try and be extra nice to the cat now."

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Unlucky for some: Mark Westhead with his number 13 shirt and black cat Toots, is now hoping for a change of luck after being told he can't change his shirt

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