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Weekly Take: Parity is the best thing for the NBA

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Parity in sports refers to the idea that teams have roughly equivalent levels of talent or success.

Most major sports leagues have rules in place that ensure parity exists; whether that be salary caps, draft lotteries, or revenue sharing. In theory it makes sense that leagues would want parity in their respective sports. Having the same team win every year could dull the experience for viewers.

The NBA is currently a league where parity seems to be the calling card, and it is the best outcome for the league.

The halfway mark of the season is almost here, and 25 of 30 teams have a realistic chance of making the playoffs. The Denver Nuggets and Memphis Grizzlies hold a six game lead in the Western Conference and have shown their dominance, but only four games separate the three seed from the no. 10 seed.

The Eastern Conference is a similar story. The Boston Celtics appear to be the best team in both the conference and the league; having sole control of the best record in the NBA. After that the second seed and fifth seed are only separated by two and a half games. While the sixth to ninth seed are only three and a half games apart.

The parity showing up this season is unlike any season in recent NBA history. There are some explanations as to why this is happening. Many teams have experienced injury plagues that have caused a lack of competition from those that usually find themselves at the top of the standings. It is also worth noting that every NBA team has at least one “superstar,” who is capable of winning games on their own. Even with these factors, the NBA is in a position where any team can win night in and night out.

But why is this parity important?

For one it gives teams and fan bases an opportunity to feel what success is like in the NBA. The Cleveland Cavaliers, currently fifth in the east, find themselves competing at the top of their conference without the assistance of LeBron James. The only success the franchise has seen since 2003, the year James was drafted, is when he was on the floor. Now the current team has a chance to write a new page in Cleveland sports history without relying on James for their success.

The Western Conference is a league of its own. As mentioned previously, 11 teams are separated by no more than four and a half games in the standings. That includes the defending champion Golden State Warriors who sit at eighth in the standings. Parity is proving that it is becoming increasingly difficult for teams to have sustained success during the regular season.

It is also making sustained success look more impressive and allowing for a new generation of talent to make their mark on the league. Such as the New Orleans Pelicans, who are currently showing what is possible when a team acquires and builds around their young stars. The model that the Celtics and Warriors have has already been proven to work.

With the way the season is going it is impossible to say who will be the last team standing; and the NBA can't ask for anything better. Current parity in the sport gives way for the league to market more of their young stars and produce a more exciting product. Additionally, it allows for fans to have more hope and reason to stay tuned through the entirety of the season.

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