

The San Diego Force advanced to Championship Week Thursday after knocking off the Cape Girardeau Capahas 7-3, and there are a few voices questioning whether or not the Force will have any impact in Championship Week.

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& GOAL



EARL WATT

There have been those who have said that the Liberal Bee Jays' appearance in "The First Week" was not really an NBC World Series appearance.

Wrong and wrong.

The San Diego Force has already had an impact on the World Series no matter how they do in "Championship Week." I seriously doubt they will turn in an 0-2 performance.

The Liberal Bee Jays faced teams in the first week that reached the final three of "The First Week."

Liberal's only two losses — to the Force and the Cape Girardeau Capahas — were the final two seeking one spot in "Championship Week."

The Force have been to the NBC World Series five years in a row. They are a legitimate competitor, and the Bee Jays were one base hit away in the 10th inning of knocking off the Force rather than losing in 13 innings.

The Capahas are also a perennial participant at the NBC World Series. They have just finished their best run at the tournament, and perhaps their biggest tournament win came with a six-run rally in the final two innings two defeat the Liberal Bee Jays 6-2 earlier this week.

The other qualifier from "The First Week" was El Dorado from Jayhawk League.

Liberal knocked off the Broncos in two out of three games in the final series of the regular season.

The Force's only loss came to the Broncos, and they survived a 13-inning battle with the Bee Jays.

The Bee Jays performance in "The First Week" was worthy of the NBC World Series.

It also was worthy for the other teams in the field and will be every bit as good as the games that will be played this week. A match-up between the Bee Jays and the Force will be better than some of the games played in "Championship Week."

If there is a flaw in the structure of the tournament, it may be that there are going to be some good teams that do not make it to "Championship Week."

That's the way it goes.

But make no mistake, the field of 30 teams that qualify for the NBC World Series are just as good across the board, whether they play in "The First Week" or Championship Week."

If the NBC wants to legitimize "The First Week," they should take four teams, the top two in the winner's bracket and the top two in the loser's bracket. Liberal still would have been one game

short, but there would be more interest, the NBC could trim two more days out of the tournament, and good teams would still have a chance to win it all.

We will have to wait and see how the Broncos and the Force compete this week, but reducing expenses on running the tournament is always a concern, for the teams and the NBC.

It still needs tweaked, because more than two teams in "The First Week" deserve a chance to compete in "Championship Week." Make it four, and it just might work.