



SUPER PROFILE

### Joel Blaker

*Director of Agronomy, Tahoe Mountain Club*

**Employer:** Tahoe Mountain Club

**Position:** Director of Agronomy

**Years in the Golf Business:** 25, 15 as Superintendent, Certified for 8

**Previous Employment:** Coyote Moon, Tahoe Donner, PeachTree, City of Sunnyvale, Willow Creek, Hyperion Field Club, Perry G&CC

**Education:** AAS Horticulture, Des Moines Area Community College

**GCSANC Work or Interests:** Past Board Member of SNGCSA

**Family:** 3 children; Amanda, Elyse and Andrew

**Interests Outside of Golf:** Kids, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and my Drill Aerifer Rental business.

**Favorite Vacation:** Elk hunting in Colorado

**Favorite Course to Play:** Coyote Moon & Old Greenwood (obviously)

**Course You'd Like to Visit:** Augusta National

**Strangest Thing You've Witnessed On The Golf Course:** A Coyote with a white house cat in his mouth or a Chevy Blazer stuck in the snow in the middle of the fairway.

**Worst Comment/Question From a Member:** You can't grow grass...you should be fired! This comment was from a men's club member at Tahoe Donner and has apologized since, he is now a friend of mine.

**What You'd Be Doing If You Weren't Involved With Golf:** Guiding Whitetail hunts in Montana.

## DIVOT REPAIR ARIZONA STYLE

*By David L. Wienecke, USGA Agronomist*

A golf ball hit off a turf surface often removes some of the turf leaving behind a hole called a divot. Traditional bermudagrass divot repair fills the divot with pure sand. Perennial ryegrass divot repairs traditionally include seed mixed with sand.

Golfers at several clubs in Arizona have been debating the best way to encourage divot turf recovery this winter in dormant bermudagrass that is overseeded with perennial ryegrass. Let's look at the case for each side in this controversy to determine which method is best.

### THE PURE SAND LOBBY:

1. Actively growing perennial ryegrass will fill in the divot by vegetative growth. Seed mixed with sand divot mixes may dry out before the seed can germinate and establish.
2. A Phoenix area golf club found golfers using sand and seed divot mixes for divot repairs caused perennial ryegrass weed problems in previously pure nonoverseeded dormant bermudagrass.
3. Moisture getting into sand and seed divot mixes may cause premature seed germination while still in the storage bin or bottle. This shelf life limitation is a liability of seed containing divot mixes.
4. Pure sand divot mixes are compatible with the creeping bermudagrass growth for divot recovery. Even though the bermudagrass is dormant in winter, the sand mix will incorporate well for the best year round play conditions.

### THE SAND MIXED WITH SEED LOBBY:

1. The perennial ryegrass is a bunch type grass and not a creeper. Vegetative growth will not fill in the divot from bunch type growth quickly enough to improve play conditions. The germinating seed mixed with sand provides a level playing surface with divot repair from the germinating seed.
2. Dormant bermudagrass is not growing during winter. The seed and sand mix is compatible with the winter perennial ryegrass turf.
3. Adding peat moss or similar organic amendments to the sand and seed divot mix will increase divot mixture moisture retention ensuring seed germination.

### THE NO DIVOT REPAIR LOBBY:

1. One golf club in Scottsdale took away the sand filled divot repair bottles from golfers because overenthusiastic divot filling caused tee and fairway mounds. The mounds caused worse play conditions after divot filling than the bare divot. Only the maintenance staff is now doing divot repairs using sand divot mixtures.
2. Another golf club stopped divot repair using sand or sand - seed mixes because they found the best turf play conditions when divots are repaired by replacing the divot sod and relying on vegetative growth to fill in the divot.
3. Some PGA tour players state they would rather play off a bare divot than to play out of an over or under filled sand divot.

### THE SOLUTION:

Establish test plots for each divot method in fairways and tees and let the results determine which method is best for your golf course. One size may not fit all!