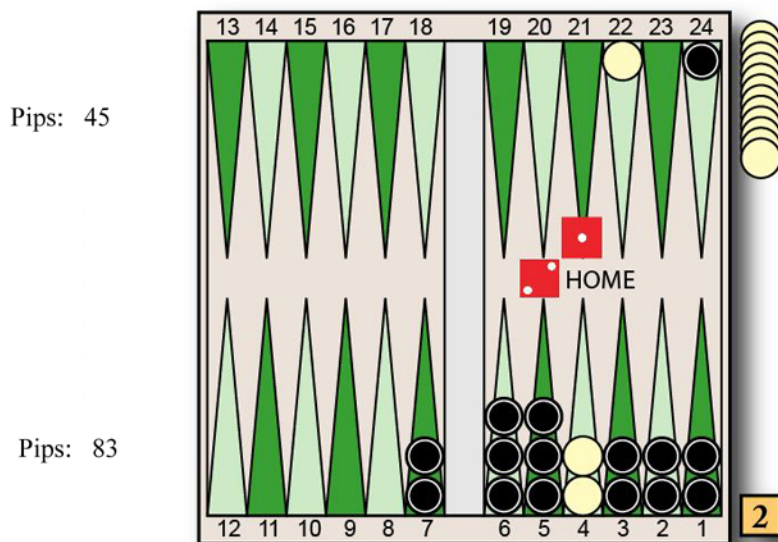


Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-1**



RIP Chicago Point

The final printed edition of Chicago Point (CP) was published this month. The backgammon community owes a huge vote of thanks to Bill Davis for his unceasing efforts to promote the game. Luckily he will continue on-line at chicagopoint.com.

Each CP featured a difficult problem analysed by a top player and it was fitting that US Master Kit Woolsey should be given the final problem. Should black hit with this 21?

Given that the game plan is to separate white's checkers on black's 4-pt the logical answer to that question is surely no – you don't want white to languish on the bar, you want him to move. You also don't want to bury checkers and so the 'obvious' play is 7/5, 24/23 ensuring that white has to move with nearly all his rolls.

Kit considered the pros and cons of hitting but was convinced 7/5, 24/23 was the correct play and I would have agreed with him. Before computers that would have been the end of the discussion but out of politeness Kit asked XG for its view!

Surprise, surprise XG came up with a move the humans hadn't even considered, 24/22*, 2/1!! This gets the third checker back but also gives white a new entry point and the opportunity to get the other checkers separated immediately on rolls of 42 and 52 and one roll later in many variations.

Kit says that in all his years of analysing problems for CP this is the first time he completely overlooked a candidate play. —*Chris Bray*