

US seizure signals shadow fleet crackdown

Associated Press

MIAMI — The oil tanker was navigating near the coast of Guyana recently when its location transponder showed it starting to zigzag. It was a seemingly improbable maneuver and the latest digital clue that the ship, the Skipper, was trying to obscure its whereabouts and the valuable cargo stored inside its hull: tens of millions of dollars' worth of illicit crude oil.

On Wednesday, U.S. commandos fast-roping from helicopters seized the 1,090-foot ship — not where it appeared to be navigating on ship tracking platforms but some 360 nautical miles to the northwest, near the coast of Venezuela.

The seizure marked a dramatic escalation in President Donald Trump's campaign to pressure strongman Nicolás Maduro by cutting off access to oil revenues that have long been the lifeblood of Venezuela's

economy. It could also signal a broader U.S. campaign to clamp down on ships like the Skipper, which experts and U.S. officials say is part of a shadowy fleet of rusting oil tankers that smuggle oil for countries facing stiff sanctions, such as Venezuela, Russia and Iran.

"There are hundreds of flagless, stateless tankers that have been a lifeline for revenues, sanctioned oil revenues, for regimes like Maduro's, Iran and for the Kremlin," said Michelle Weise Bockmann, a senior analyst at Windward, a maritime intelligence firm that tracks such vessels. "They can no longer operate unchallenged."

Since the first Trump administration imposed punishing oil sanctions on Venezuela in 2017, Maduro's government has relied on scores of such oil tankers to smuggle their crude into global supply chains.

The ships cloak their loca-

tions by altering their automated identification system — a mandatory safety feature intended to help avoid collisions — to either go entirely dark or to "spoof" their location to appear to be navigating sometimes oceans away, under a false flag or with the fake registration information of another vessel.

The dark fleet expanded following U.S. sanctions on Russia over its 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Experts say many of the ships are barely seaworthy, operate without insurance and are registered to shell companies that help conceal their ownership.

The vessels often transfer their cargoes to other ships while at sea, further obscuring their origins, experts said.

For the most part, Maduro's government has succeeded in using such tactics to get its oil to market. The country's oil production has increased about 25% over the last two years, ac-

cording to OPEC data. Still, Wednesday's seizure could mark a turning point, experts said, foreshadowing a possible oil blockade that could deter smuggling from even some of the shipping industry's worst actors.

"The cost of doing business with Venezuela just went way up," said Claire Jungman, director of maritime risk and intelligence at Vortexa, an oil analytics firm. "These are very risk-tolerant operators, but even they don't want to lose a hull. A physical seizure is an entirely different category of risk than falsifying paperwork and bank fines."

Windward reported that the Skipper is one of about 30 sanctioned tankers operating near Venezuela, many of them vulnerable to U.S. interception because they are falsely flagged, making them stateless under international maritime law.

USS Lincoln, strike group back in Guam after one year

By ALEX WILSON

Stars and Stripes

The aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and its strike group pulled into Guam's Apra Harbor on Thursday, the ship's first visit to the island since 2024.

The Abraham Lincoln, accompanied by the guided-missile destroyers USS Spruance, USS Michael Murphy and USS Frank E. Peterson Jr., stopped at the island less than three weeks into its deployment, according to a carrier strike group news release Thursday.

The carrier departed Nov. 24 with little fanfare from its homeport in San Diego, the San

Diego Union-Tribune reported the next day.

The Abraham Lincoln is the second carrier to visit Guam this month; the USS George Washington stopped there Dec. 1 before ending its six-month patrol Thursday at Yokosuka Naval Base.

"My crew is excited to be back in this area of the world, and we look forward to demonstrating what an aircraft carrier and carrier strike group bring to the fight," Abraham Lincoln's commander, Capt. Dan Keeler, said in the release. "Our Sailors are eager to learn from new cultures and strengthen partnerships across the region through-

out our deployment."

The Defense Department regularly refers to Guam, the westernmost U.S. territory, as "the tip of the spear" and sees it as a platform for U.S. power projection in the Indo-Pacific. Three major U.S. military installations — Naval Base Guam, Andersen Air Force Base and Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz — are there, and it serves as a strategic logistics hub.

"Our Strike Group presence in 7th Fleet waters demonstrates our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," strike group commander Rear Adm. Todd Whalen said in the release. "Port calls to strategic

locations like Guam enhance our mission readiness and help us stay ready to execute maritime operations in theater."

A strike group spokesman did not immediately respond request for additional comments on Friday.

The carrier last visited Guam in November 2024 for a brief respite before heading to the Middle East to relieve its sister ship, the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt.

Then-Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered the Abraham Lincoln to the Middle East in a bid to prevent conflicts between Israel and Iran and its proxies from escalating.

Denmark warns of US threat under Trump

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — The United States is using its economic power to “assert its will” and threaten military force against friend and foe alike, a Danish intelligence agency said in a new report.

The Danish Defense Intelligence Service, in its latest annual assessment, said Washington’s greater assertiveness under the Trump administration also comes as China and Russia seek to diminish Western, especially American, influence.

Perhaps most sensitive to Denmark — a NATO and European Union member country, and a U.S. ally — is growing competition between those great powers in the Arctic. U.S. President Donald Trump has expressed a desire to see Greenland, a semiautonomous and mineral-rich territory of Den-

mark, become part of the United States, a move opposed by Russia and much of Europe.

“The strategic importance of the Arctic is rising as the conflict between Russia and the West intensifies, and the growing security and strategic focus on the Arctic by the United States will further accelerate these developments,” said the report, published Wednesday.

The assessment also follows the release last week of a new Trump administration national security strategy that depicts European allies as weak and aims to reassert America’s dominance in the Western Hemisphere.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said Russia is worried about NATO’s activities in the Arctic and will respond by strengthening its military capability in the polar region.

The findings and analyses in the report echo a string of recent concerns, notably in Western Europe, about an increasingly go-it-alone approach by the United States, which under Trump’s second term has favored bilateral deals and partnerships at the expense of multilateral alliances like NATO.

“For many countries outside the West, it has become a viable option to forge strategic agreements with China rather than the United States,” read the report, which was written in Danish. “China and Russia, together with other like-minded states, are seeking to reduce Western — and particularly US — global influence.”

“At the same time, uncertainty has grown over how the United States will prioritize its resources in the future,” it added. “This gives regional powers

greater room for maneuver, enabling them to choose between the United States and China or to strike a balance between the two.”

The Trump administration has raised concerns about respect for international law with its series of deadly strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean — part of a stepped-up pressure campaign against President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela.

Trump has also refused to rule out military force in Greenland, where the United States already has a military base.

“The United States is leveraging economic power, including threats of high tariffs, to assert its will, and the possibility of employing military force — even against allies — is no longer ruled out,” the report said.

Belarus leader hosts US envoy to strengthen ties

Associated Press

Authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko on Friday hosted a U.S. envoy for talks in the Belarus capital of Minsk, the latest step in the isolated leader’s effort to improve ties with the West.

Lukashenko met with President Donald Trump’s special envoy for Belarus, John Coale, according to state news agency Belta and the presidential press service. The press service said the talks would continue Saturday.

The last time U.S. officials met with Lukashenko, Washington announced easing some of the sanctions against Belarus, and more than 50 political prisoners were released and brought to Lithuania. Overall, Belarus released more than 430 prisoners since July 2024 in what was widely seen as an ef-

fort at a rapprochement with the West.

“They say Trump loves flattery. But I’m not aiming for flattery. I want to say that I really like his actions lately,” Belta quoted Lukashenko as saying.

A close ally of Russia, Minsk has faced Western isolation and sanctions for years. Lukashenko has ruled the nation of 9.5 million with an iron fist for more than three decades, and the country has been sanctioned repeatedly by Western countries — both for its crackdown on human rights and for allowing Moscow to use its territory in the invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Lukashenko’s rule was challenged after a 2020 presidential election that kept him in power, when tens of thousands of people poured into the streets to protest a vote widely seen as rigged. They were the largest

demonstrations in Belarus’ history, after the country became independent following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

In an ensuing crackdown, tens of thousands of people were detained, with many beaten by police. Prominent opposition figures either fled the country or were imprisoned.

Five years after the mass demonstrations, Lukashenko won a seventh term in an election that the opposition called a farce.

More recently, however, Belarus has begun to free some political prisoners to try to win favor with the West. Since Trump returned to the White House this year, Lukashenko has released dozens of prisoners, including key dissident figure Siarhei Tsikhanouski — the husband of exiled opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanous-

kaya. His release came after a visit to Belarus by U.S. envoy Keith Kellogg.

Trump spoke to Lukashenko by phone in August after one such release and even suggested a face-to-face meeting in what would be a big victory for the Belarusian leader, who has been dubbed “Europe’s Last Dictator.”

A month later, Lukashenko freed more than 50 prisoners, and the U.S. lifted sanctions on the country’s national airline, Belavia, allowing it to repair and buy parts for its planes, including Boeing aircraft.

Human rights advocates point out that Belarusian authorities continue their relentless crackdown on dissents despite the prisoner releases, with more people regularly arrested on politically motivated charges.

Trump signs order to block state AI limits

Associated Press

President Donald Trump signed an executive order Thursday aimed at blocking states from crafting their own regulations for artificial intelligence, saying the burgeoning industry is at risk of being stifled by a patchwork of onerous rules while in a battle with Chinese competitors for supremacy.

Members of Congress from both parties, as well as civil liberties and consumer rights groups, have pushed for more regulations on AI, saying there is not enough oversight for the powerful technology.

But Trump told reporters in the Oval Office that “there’s only going to be one winner” as nations race to dominate artificial

intelligence, and China’s central government gives its companies a single place to go for government approvals.

“We have the big investment coming, but if they had to get 50 different approvals from 50 different states, you can forget it because it’s impossible to do,” Trump said.

The executive order directs the Attorney General to create a new task force to challenge state laws, and directs the Commerce Department to draw up a list of problematic regulations.

It also threatens to restrict funding from a broadband deployment program and other grant programs to states with AI laws.

David Sacks, a venture capitalist with extensive AI invest-

ments who is leading Trump’s policies on cryptocurrency and artificial intelligence, said the Trump administration would only push back on “the most onerous examples of state regulation” but would not oppose “kid safety” measures.

Four states — Colorado, California, Utah and Texas — have passed laws that set some rules for AI across the private sector, according to the International Association of Privacy Professionals.

Those laws include limiting the collection of certain personal information and requiring more transparency from companies.

The laws are in response to AI that already pervades everyday life. The technology helps make

consequential decisions for Americans, including who gets a job interview, an apartment lease, a home loan and even certain medical care. But research has shown that it can make mistakes in those decisions, including by prioritizing a particular gender or race.

States’ more ambitious AI regulation proposals require private companies to provide transparency and assess the possible risks of discrimination from their AI programs.

Beyond those more sweeping rules, many states have regulated parts of AI: barring the use of deepfakes in elections and to create nonconsensual porn, for example, or putting rules in place around the government’s own use of AI.

Senators seek NDAA changes regarding DC plane crash

Associated Press

Senators from both parties pushed Thursday for changes to a massive defense bill after crash investigators and victims’ families warned the legislation would undo key safety reforms stemming from a collision between an airliner and Army helicopter over Washington, D.C., that killed 67 people.

The head of the National Transportation Safety Board investigating the crash, a group of the victims’ family members and senators on the Commerce Committee all said the bill the House advanced Wednesday would make America’s skies less safe. It would allow the military to operate essentially the same way as it did before the January crash, which was the deadliest in more than two decades, they said.

Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell and Republican Committee Chairman Sen. Ted Cruz filed two amendments Thursday to strip out the worrisome helicopter safety provisions and replace them with a bill they in-

troduced last summer to strengthen requirements, but it’s not clear if Republican leadership will allow the National Defense Authorization Act to be changed at this stage because that would delay its passage.

“We owe it to the families to put into law actual safety improvements, not give the Department of Defense bigger loopholes to exploit,” the senators said.

Right now, the bill includes exceptions that would allow military helicopters to fly through the crowded airspace around the nation’s capital without using a key system called ADS-B to broadcast their locations just like they did before the January collision. The Federal Aviation Administration began requiring this in March. NTSB Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy called the bill a “significant safety setback” that is inviting a repeat of that disaster.

“It represents an unacceptable risk to the flying public, to commercial and military aircraft, crews and to the residents

in the region,” Homendy said. “It’s also an unthinkable dismissal of our investigation and of 67 families ... who lost loved ones in a tragedy that was entirely preventable. This is shameful.”

The biggest unions representing pilots, flight attendants and other transportation workers joined the chorus criticizing the bill. Sara Nelson, who is president of the Association of Flight Attendants, questioned why this was proposed. She said these provisions are “not only reckless and indefensible, but also a direct undermining of the NTSB’s safety guidance.”

Senate Majority Leader John Thune said he is looking into the concerns but thinks they can be addressed by quickly passing the aviation safety bill that Cruz and Cantwell proposed last summer that would require all aircraft operators to use both forms of ADS-B, or Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast, the technology to broadcast aircraft location data to other planes and air traffic con-

trollers. Most aircraft today are equipped with ADS-B Out equipment but the airlines would have to add the more comprehensive ADS-B In technology to their planes.

That legislation would also revoke an exemption on ADS-B transmission requests for Department of Defense aircraft.

“I think that would resolve the concerns that people have about that provision, and hoping — we’ll see if we can find a pathway forward to get that bill done,” said Thune, a South Dakota Republican.

The military used national security waivers before the crash to skirt FAA safety requirements on the grounds that they worried about the security risks of disclosing their helicopters’ locations. Tim and Sheri Lilley, whose son Sam was the first officer on the American Airlines jet, said this bill only adds “a window dressing fix that would continue to allow for the setting aside of requirements with nothing more than a cursory risk assessment.”

Washington floods force evacuations

Associated Press

MOUNT VERNON, Wash. — National Guard troops went door-to-door early Friday to evacuate a farming city north of Seattle as severe flooding throughout Western Washington stranded families on rooftops, washed over bridges and ripped homes from their foundations.

Days of torrential rain have swelled rivers to record or near-record levels, with Gov. Bob Ferguson warning that as many as 100,000 people would need to evacuate statewide.

Officials had warned that dikes and levees could fail and issued “go now” orders Wednesday to tens of thousands of residents in the flood plain of the Skagit River, including in the city of Burlington, home to nearly 10,000.

But by Friday morning, the muddy waters began overflowing a slough and rushing into homes, and officials’ pleas became more urgent.

“ALL RESIDENTS IN THE CITY OF BURLINGTON SHOULD EVACUATE IMME-

DEDIATELY,” Skagit County wrote on social media.

A number of rivers surpassed their flood stages overnight, including the Skagit at the towns of Concrete and Mount Vernon. It crested at more than 37 feet at Mount Vernon, according to weather service data.

Further north near the U.S.-Canada border, the cities of Sumas, Nooksack and Everson were evacuated after being inundated. The border crossing at Sumas was closed and Amtrak suspended trains between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia.

The mayor of Sumas, Bruce Bosch, said much of the city has been “devastated” by the high waters just four years after a similar flood.

The Snohomish River surged nearly a foot higher than its record Thursday in the picturesque city that shares its name, while the Skagit River had already broken its record as of Thursday night in Mount Vernon, according to the National Water Prediction Service.

Man accused of killing Kirk in court for 1st time

Associated Press

PROVO, Utah — The Utah man charged with killing Charlie Kirk made his first in-person court appearance Thursday as his attorneys pushed to further limit media access in the high-profile criminal case.

Prosecutors have charged Tyler Robinson with aggravated murder in the Sept. 10 shooting of the conservative activist on the Utah Valley University campus in Orem, just a few miles north of the Provo courthouse. They plan to seek the death penalty.

Robinson, 22, arrived amid heavy security, shackled at the waist, wrists and ankles and wearing a dress shirt, tie and slacks.

He smiled at his parents and brother sitting in the front row. His mother teared up after he walked in and clutched a tissue throughout the hearing while his father took notes. Robinson had previously appeared before the court via video or audio feed from jail.

Early in the proceedings, state District Court Judge Tony Graf briefly stopped a media livestream of the hearing and ordered the camera be moved after Robinson’s attorneys said

the stream showed the defendant’s shackles in violation of a courtroom order.

Graf said he would terminate future broadcasts if there were further violations of the order issued in October, which bars media from showing images of Robinson in restraints or anywhere in the courtroom except sitting at the defense table.

“This court takes this very seriously,” Graf said. “While the court believes in openness and transparency, it needs to be balanced with the constitutional rights of all parties in this case.”

The warning comes as Graf has been weighing the public’s right to know details about the case against concerns by Robinson’s attorneys that the swarm of media attention could interfere with a fair trial.

Robinson’s legal team and the Utah County Sheriff’s Office have asked to ban cameras in the courtroom, but Graf has not yet ruled on the request.

Coalitions of national and local news organizations, including The Associated Press, are fighting to preserve media access in the case.

Robinson is due in court again in January.

Judge bans officials from detaining Kilmar Abrego Garcia

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — A federal judge blocked U.S. immigration authorities on Friday from re-detaining Kilmar Abrego Garcia, saying she feared they might take him into custody again just hours after she had ordered his release from a detention center.

The order came as Abrego Garcia appeared at a scheduled appointment at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement field office roughly 14 hours after he walked out of immigration detention facility in Pennsylvania.

His lawyers had sent an urgent request to the judge, warning that ICE officials could immediately place him back into custody. Instead, Abrego Garcia exited the building after a short appointment, emerging to cheers from supporters who had gathered outside.

Speaking briefly to the crowd, he urged others to “stand tall” against what he described as injustices carried out by the government.

Abrego Garcia became a flashpoint of the Trump administration’s immigration crack-

down earlier this year when he was wrongly deported to a notorious prison in El Salvador. He was last taken into custody in August during a similar check-in.

Officials cannot re-detain him until the court conducts a hearing on the motion for the temporary restraining order, U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis in Maryland said. She wrote that Abrego Garcia is likely to succeed on the merits of any further request for relief from ICE detention.

“For the public to have any faith in the orderly administra-

tion of justice, the Court’s narrowly crafted remedy cannot be so quickly and easily upended without further briefing and consideration,” she wrote.

Abrego Garcia on Friday stopped at a news conference outside the building.

“I stand before you a free man and I want you to remember me this way, with my head held up high,” Abrego Garcia said through a translator. “I come here today with so much hope and I thank God who has been with me since the start with my family.”

Strike in Portugal disrupts travel, services

Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal — A strike called by Portugal's two main trade union confederations severely disrupted travel Thursday and forced the cancellation of many medical appointments and school classes. Government and municipal services, including trash collection, were also badly hit.

The two labor groups representing close to a million Portuguese workers say it could be the country's biggest walkout in more than 10 years as they contest the center-right govern-

ment's planned changes to employment laws.

The unions say the changes strip workers of entitlements, while the government argues they are needed to make the economy more supple and spur growth.

The proposed changes include making it easier for companies to fire workers, denying the right to strike in additional sectors of the economy and limiting breastfeeding breaks for mothers to the first two years of a baby's life from the current open-ended dispensation.

Downtown Lisbon was strikingly quiet, with few pedestrians and light traffic compared to a usual weekday in the capital as some people went on strike and others worked from home to avoid the transport disruption.

At Lisbon international airport, dozens of flights were canceled as pilots, flight attendants and baggage handlers walked out. The airport was open but largely deserted.

Flag carrier TAP Air Portugal operated only 63 of its 283 scheduled flights, in line with

the minimum level of service required by law. The airline had previously warned passengers about the strike and offered to put them on other flights.

Train and bus services across Portugal also ran a skeleton service. The Lisbon Metro subway said services were suspended at 11 p.m. Wednesday and would resume only on Friday morning.

Private companies were also affected, with manufacturing and distribution companies reporting walkouts. Some Lisbon stores were closed.

Trump: Thai, Cambodian leaders to renew ceasefire

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Friday that Thai and Cambodian leaders have agreed to renew a truce after days of deadly clashes had threatened to undo a ceasefire the U.S. administration had helped broker earlier this year.

Trump announced the agreement to restart the ceasefire in a social media posting following calls with Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet.

"They have agreed to CEASE all shooting effective this evening, and go back to the original Peace Accord made with me, and them, with the help of the Great Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim," Trump said on Truth Social.

Trump, a Republican, said that Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim played an important role in helping him

push Thailand and Cambodia to once again agree to cease fighting.

"It is my Honor to work with Anutin and Hun in resolving what could have evolved into a major War between two otherwise wonderful and prosperous Countries!" Trump added.

The original ceasefire in July was brokered by Malaysia and pushed through by pressure from Trump, who threatened to withhold trade privileges unless Thailand and Cambodia agreed. It was formalized in more detail in October at a regional meeting in Malaysia that Trump attended.

Despite the deal, the two countries carried on a bitter propaganda war and minor cross-border violence continued.

The roots of the Thai-Cambodian border conflict lie in a history of enmity over competing territorial claims.

Supporters: Iran arrests Nobel Peace Prize laureate

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran has arrested Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, her supporters said Friday.

A foundation in her name said she was detained in Mashhad, some 420 miles northeast of the capital, Tehran, while attending a memorial for a human rights lawyer recently found dead under unclear circumstances.

A local official reportedly acknowledged arrests had been made, but did not directly name Mohammadi, 53. It wasn't clear if authorities would immediately return her to prison, where she had been serving a sentence until her temporary release in December 2024 for medical purposes.

Arresting Mohammadi may spark increased pressure from the West at a time when Iran repeatedly signals it wants new

negotiations with the United States over its nuclear program — something that has yet to happen.

Her supporters on Friday described her as having been "violently detained earlier today by security and police forces." They said other activists had been arrested as well at a ceremony honoring Khosrow Ali-kordi, a 46-year-old Iranian lawyer and human rights advocate who had been based in Mashhad.

"The Narges Foundation calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained individuals who were attending a memorial ceremony to pay their respects and demonstrate solidarity," a statement read. "Their arrest constitutes a serious violation of fundamental freedoms."

An engineer by training, Mohammadi has been imprisoned 13 times and convicted five.

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Army will try to turn tables on Navy

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — At most schools, players try to stay hyper-focused on the task at hand. Future opponents can wait. No looking ahead.

It is, needless to say, different at Army and Navy.

"We say 'Beat Navy' for 365 days of the year," Army linebacker Gavin Shields said. "It's the whole motto of our team."

Army and Navy meet Saturday in Baltimore for their annual clash. It's the game players think about all season, and the one coaches have an eye on, too.

"This game is thought about far more than just the days leading up to it," Army coach Jeff Monken said. "Our academy opponents are different. Defending them is different. Because they know us so well, trying to have a game plan prepared on offense is different. It's an effort throughout the year."

The importance of this rivalry hasn't prevented Army (6-5) and No. 22 Navy (9-2) from being successful against other teams as well. Both have secured bowl bids — the Black

Knights to the Fenway Bowl and the Midshipmen to the Liberty Bowl. Navy finished tied for first in the American Athletic Conference, missing out on the league title game because of tiebreakers.

Last year, Army won the AAC for the first conference title in the program's storied history. The Black Knights were in the Top 25 before losing 31-13 to Navy. So this year is a chance for Army to turn the tables.

The rivalry is what draws viewers in December, but the football during the other months has also been pretty good of late. Even if that's all very much in the past now.

"If you don't win Army-Navy, your season, it's considered kind of a loss when you think about it. We have nine wins right now, and if we lose to Army, it kind of seems all for naught," Navy receiver Nathan Kent said. "Army won the American last year, Army had 11 wins last year. But they didn't win the Army-Navy game, so it doesn't seem like they had a winning season."

Rotating venues

For a second straight season, this game is being played in Navy's back yard. The Midshipmen won in Landover, Md., last year. This year, the game is being played in Baltimore for the first time since 2016.

On the call

CBS is airing Saturday's game, as it has done every year since 1996. It'll be a record 17th call of this matchup for analyst Gary Danielson, who is retiring.

Nobody has called more Army-Navy games on TV than Danielson. Verne Lundquist did it 11 times — nine on play by play and twice as a sideline reporter.

The game will also be broadcast on AFN-Sports.

Additional stakes

This game will determine the winner of the Commander-In-Chief's Trophy, which goes to the winner of the annual round-robin competition of Army, Navy and Air Force. Navy won it last year by sweeping the other two academies.

If all three teams go 1-1 against each other, the previous year's winner retains the trophy, but both Army and Navy scored narrow wins over Air Force this season, making this week's game winner take all.

History

Army has not defeated an AP-ranked Navy team since 1955. The Midshipmen were in the CFP rankings — but not the AP Top 25 — when they lost to Army in 2016.

Finalists

Navy quarterback Blake Horvath and Army linebacker Andon Thomas were both finalists this week for the William V. Campbell Trophy, also known as the Academic Heisman. The honor ultimately went to Vanderbilt tight end Eli Stowers.

Horvath is the first quarterback in the FBS to produce 1,000 yards passing and 1,000 yards rushing in back-to-back seasons since Lamar Jackson of Louisville and Quinton Flowers of South Florida both did it in 2016 and 2017.

Vonn, 41, wins 1st race since '18 in World Cup downhill

Associated Press

The queen of downhill skiing is well and truly back. At age 41, she's still faster than the rest.

Lindsey Vonn raced to a stunningly fast win in a World Cup downhill at St. Moritz, Switzerland, on Friday to earn her first victory in nearly eight years — and the first in her comeback with titanium implants in her right knee after a five-year retirement.

The U.S. skiing great became the oldest winner of an Alpine race, male or female, in World Cup history.

The previous oldest World Cup race winner was Switzerland's Didier Cuche at 37 in a men's super-G in 2012. Italy's

Federica Brignone was the oldest previous female winner at 34 last season.

Vonn seized the lead by an astonishing 1.16 seconds ahead of Mirjam Puchner of Austria. Even wilder was that Vonn trailed by 0.61 after the first two time checks at the Swiss resort.

Vonn's lead was later cut to 0.98 — still a massive margin in downhill — when unheralded Magdalena Egger took second place from teammate Puchner.

"It was an amazing day, I couldn't be happier; pretty emotional," Vonn told Swiss broadcaster RTS. "I felt good this summer, but I wasn't sure how fast I was. I guess I know now how fast I am."

Soon after, Vonn shed tears on the podium when "The Star-Spangled Banner" played.

It was a perfect start to her Olympic season to get a first victory since a downhill in March 2018 at Are, Sweden.

The 2010 Olympic champion is targeting another gold medal at the Milan Cortina Winter Games in February. Women's Alpine skiing is at the storied Cortina d'Ampezzo course in the Dolomites, which Vonn has mastered in her career with 12 World Cup race wins.

Vonn's superb debut working with new coach Aksel Lund Svindal, a men's downhill great who won the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics title, suggests their

stellar partnership is paying off.

Her run Friday looked routine when she dropped tenths of seconds to Puchner's time on the top half of the sunbathed Corviglia course, where the finish is at an altitude above 6,500 feet. Vonn then was faster than anyone through the next speed checks, touching 74 mph, and posted the fastest time splits for the bottom half.

She skied through the finish area and bumped against the inflated safety barrier, lay down in the snow and raised her arms on seeing her time.

Vonn has won a record-extending 44 World Cup downhills, and has 83 wins across all World Cup disciplines.

Cousins, Falcons rally past Buccaneers

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Maybe Kirk Cousins should've been starting the entire season.

Cousins threw three touchdown passes to Kyle Pitts Sr., and Zane Gonzalez kicked a 43-yard field goal as time expired to complete the Atlanta Falcons' rally for a 29-28 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Thursday night.

Facing a third-and-28 on the Falcons' final drive, Cousins completed passes of 14 yards to Pitts and 20 yards on fourth-and-14 to David Sills V to set up Gonzalez.

The Falcons (5-9) overcame a franchise-record 19 penalties and a 28-14 fourth-quarter deficit to damage Tampa Bay's playoff hopes.

Cousins, who lost his starting job to Michael Penix Jr. last year after signing a free-agent deal that included \$100 million guaranteed, has owned the Buccaneers since joining the Falcons last season. He's 3-0 against them with 1,158 yards passing, 11 TDs and one interception. He finished this one 30 of 44 for 373 yards.

"Pro Football tests you," Cousins said. "It keeps me on my

knees (in prayer). It's been a difficult two years since tearing my Achilles. All I know to do is trust and keep going and walk by faith, not by sight, and that can be hard sometimes. Nights like tonight, you get a boost."

Baker Mayfield threw a crucial interception in the fourth quarter as the Buccaneers (7-7) lost for the fifth time in six games to fall a half-game behind Carolina in the NFC South. The four-time defending division champions face the Panthers (7-6) twice in the final three games.

"This one is gonna haunt me. It falls on my shoulders," Mayfield said. "It's not the defense's fault. It's my fault."

Wearing their Creamsicle jerseys on the 48th anniversary of the franchise's first win — that one came after an 0-26 start — the Buccaneers were booed off the field.

"You don't make excuses," Bucs coach Todd Bowles said in an expletive-laden reaction. "You got to (bleeping) care enough where the (bleep) hurts. It's got to (bleeping) mean something to you. It's more than a job. It's your (bleeping) livelihood. How well do you know

your job? How well can you do your job? You can't sugarcoat that (bleep)."

After Pitts made a leaping, acrobatic grab for a 7-yard TD with 3:34 remaining to pull the Falcons within 28-26, Cousins was pressured and threw incomplete on the 2-point conversion try.

The Falcons forced the Buccaneers to punt and got the ball at their 30 with no timeouts and 1:49 to go.

Haason Reddick sacked Cousins, forcing a fumble that the Buccaneers grabbed coming out of the pile. But officials ruled it was recovered by both team simultaneously, and the Falcons kept the ball.

Pitts finished with 11 catches for 166 yards, becoming the first tight end with 150 yards receiving and three TDs since Hall of Famer Shannon Sharpe did it in 1996.

Mayfield tossed a 6-yard TD pass to Devin Culp, the second-year pro's first scoring catch in the NFL, that made it 20-14.

On the ensuing drive, Sills dropped what should have been a 44-yard TD catch and the Falcons ended up punting.

Bijan Robinson fumbled on

Atlanta's next possession after taking a shot from Christian Izien and Jacob Parrish recovered at the Falcons 25.

Mayfield fired a 3-yard TD pass to Chris Godwin Jr. and they connected for the conversion to extend the lead to 28-14.

But Robinson's 6-yard TD run cut the deficit to 28-20 with under 10 minutes left. After the Falcons missed the 2-point try, Dee Alford intercepted Mayfield's pass and Atlanta drove 67 yards for a score.

Mayfield had all of his wide receivers available for the first time this season after six-time Pro Bowl pick Mike Evans and second-year pro Jalen McMillan were activated from injured reserve. Evans broke his clavicle on Oct. 20. McMillan broke three vertebrae in his neck in the preseason.

Evans made an immediate impact, catching six passes for 132 yards and drawing several penalties.

Cousins beat the Buccaneers twice last year in his first season with Atlanta. He threw for 785 yards, eight touchdowns and only one interception. He had 509 yards passing against them in one of the wins.

Poole returns with 22, Pelicans stop losing streak at 7

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Jordan Poole scored 22 points in his return after missing 18 games with a left quadriceps injury, and the New Orleans Pelicans snapped a seven-game losing streak with a 143-120 win over the short-handed Portland Trail Blazers on Thursday night.

Trey Murphy III had 24 points and Bryce McGowens hit all five 3-pointers he took on his way to tying a career high with 23 points on 8-of-11 shooting for New Orleans.

The Pelicans won for just the second time since James Borre-

go took over as coach after Willie Green was fired on Nov. 15.

Shaedon Sharpe scored 21 points for Portland, which had only 10 players available and lost for the sixth time in seven games.

Six players scored 15 or more points for the Pelicans, including rookies Jeremiah Fears (19) and Derik Queen (17). New Orleans also set a franchise record with 86 points in the paint.

Sidy Cissoko scored 20 points for the Blazers. Jerami Grant and Deni Avdija each had 16.

Bucks 116, Celtics 101: Kyle Kuzma scored a season-

high 31 points and Bobby Portis added 27 points and 10 rebounds as host Milwaukee rallied in the second half to defeat Boston without injured star Giannis Antetokounmpo.

Portis hit two 3-pointers from the left corner as Milwaukee opened the fourth quarter with an 8-2 run to go in front 95-82. Another 3 by Portis put the Bucks up 106-89 with 6:49 remaining.

Rockets 115, Clippers 113: Amen Thompson's three-point play with 17.2 seconds left helped Houston to a victory over visiting Los Angeles.

Thompson tipped in Alperen Sengun's miss to break a 110-110 tie, was fouled by Kris Dunn and hit the and-1 free throw. The putback came off Houston's third offensive rebound of the possession and 21st of the night.

Nuggets 136, Kings 105: Nikola Jokic had 36 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists as Denver cruised to a victory at Sacramento.

Peyton Watson scored 21 points on 7-of-10 shooting for the Nuggets (18-6). Cameron Johnson added 16 and Jonas Valanciunas had 15 points and six rebounds off the bench.

Canes pull even with Caps in East

Associated Press

Brandon Bussi stopped all three shots in a shootout as the Carolina Hurricanes beat the Washington Capitals 3-2 on Thursday night in a matchup of the top two teams in the Eastern Conference standings.

The Hurricanes pulled even with Washington atop the conference and Metropolitan Division. Bussi ran his record to 10-1-0. The Carolina rookie stopped Anthony Beauvillier, Dylan Strome and Sonny Milano in the shootout. Strome also failed to convert a breakaway in overtime after two Carolina players collided.

Washington has lost all four of its shootouts this season.

Seth Jarvis had the lone goal in the shootout, but it was Logan Stankoven who gave him the opportunity by scoring the tying goal with 2:15 left in regulation. Nikolaj Ehlers scored for Carolina in the second.

Connor McMichael opened the scoring for Washington in the second, and Nic Dowd put the Capitals up 2-1 with 8:28 left in the third.

Bussi has now won eight straight. Only Cam Ward, with a nine-game run in 2009, has a longer streak in franchise history.

Canadiens 4, Penguins 2: Jacob Fowler made 33 saves in his NHL debut as Montreal won at Pittsburgh.

Montreal gave the rookie plenty of support, as Alexandre Texier, Brendan Gallagher and Cole Caufield staked the Canadiens to a 3-0 lead through two periods. Oliver Kapanen also scored to help Montreal snap a two-game skid.

Bryan Rust scored and Erik Karlsson had a power-play goal for Pittsburgh. Sidney Crosby added an assist and is now four points from breaking Mario Lemieux's franchise record for points. Lemieux is ninth all-time in NHL history.

Oilers 4, Red Wings 1: Zach

Hyman scored three goals and Connor McDavid had four assists as Edmonton beat visiting Detroit.

Mattias Ekholm also scored and Leon Draisaitl had two assists for the Oilers, who have won three of their past four games. Stuart Skinner stopped 27 shots.

Simon Edvinsson scored for the Red Wings, who snapped a three-game winning streak. Cam Talbot had 25 saves.

Sharks 3, Maple Leafs 2 (OT): Alexander Wennberg scored with 2:49 left in overtime, and San Jose came back from a two-goal deficit to win at Toronto.

Wennberg scored the winner when he kicked the puck from his skate to his stick from in tight.

John Klingberg scored with 1:25 left in regulation and Dmitry Orlov scored his first goal of the season for San Jose in the second period. Alex Nedeljkovic made 28 saves for and Wennberg finished with two assists.

Golden Knights 3, Flyers 2 (OT): Mark Stone scored his second goal of the game 2:47 into overtime to give Vegas a victory over host Philadelphia.

The winning goal was a partial gift, as Philadelphia's Travis Konecny flubbed an attempted outlet pass near the Flyers net, allowing Vegas star Jack Eichel to take possession and then feed an onrushing Stone.

Zach Whitecloud scored in the first period for the Golden Knights. Trevor Zegras and defenseman Noah Juulsen had the goals for Philadelphia.

Predators 7, Blues 2: Steven Stamkos scored four goals and Nashville beat visiting St. Louis for its fourth win in five games.

Filip Forsberg, Ryan O'Reilly and Michael Bunting also scored for Nashville. Luke Evangelista had three assists, and Roman Josi, Matthew Wood, Nick Blankenburg and Fedor Svechikov each had two.

Juuse Saros finished with 24 saves.

Robert Thomas and Hugh McGing scored for St. Louis, and Philip Broberg had two assists. Jordan Binnington had 19 saves through two periods, and Joel Hofer had six in the third.

Lightning 8, Devils 4: Nick Paul, Darren Raddysh and Pontus Holmberg each scored in the opening eight minutes to chase Jacob Markstrom, and injury-depleted Tampa Bay defeated host New Jersey.

The Lightning have strung together consecutive victories following a four-game skid, which culminated with back-to-back shutout losses. Oliver Bjorkstrand had two goals, Jake Guentzel, Brandon Hagel and Brayden Point got one apiece and Nikita Kucherov recorded four assists as Tampa Bay combined to score 14 times in these two wins.

Senators 6, Blue Jackets 3: Tim Stütze scored twice, and visiting Ottawa used a four-goal first period to snap a three-game skid.

Michael Amadio had a goal and two assists, David Perron and Drake Batherson each had a goal and an assist, and Claude Giroux also scored. Dylan Cozens finished with three assists, and Linus Ullmark made 22 saves for Ottawa, which had lost six of its past eight but has now won two straight on the road.

Boone Jenner had a goal and an assist for Columbus in his first game back after missing 14 with an upper-body injury.

Islanders 5, Ducks 2: Anders Lee scored twice and had two assists, and David Rittich made 31 saves as New York beat visiting Anaheim.

Simon Holmstrom had a goal and two assists and defensemen Travis Mitchell and Ryan Pullock each scored as the Islanders won for the fifth time in six games.

Leo Carlsson and Troy Terry scored for Anaheim, which had

its three-game winning streak snapped.

Bruins 6, Jets 3: David Pastrnak had two goals and two assists, leading Boston to a victory at Winnipeg.

Elias Lindholm, Hampus Lindholm, Sean Kuraly and Casey Mittelstadt also scored for Boston. Joonas Korpisalo stopped 26 shots.

Gabe Vilardi, Alex Iafallo and Morgan Barron had the goals for the Jets, who dropped their third straight game. Eric Comrie made 18 saves before 13,158 fans — Winnipeg's smallest crowd of the season.

Wild 5, Stars 2: Marcus Johansson scored twice, Matt Boldy had a goal and two assists, and Minnesota ended visiting Dallas' 11-game point streak.

Joel Eriksson Ek had a goal and an assist, Zach Bogosian also scored, and Vladimir Tarasenko had two assists as Minnesota won its second straight after a two-game skid that followed its 12-game point streak (10-0-2). Filip Gustavsson stopped 16 shots.

Avalanche 6, Panthers 2: Nathan MacKinnon was one of six Colorado players to score in a victory over visiting Florida.

Sam Malinski, Brock Nelson, Gavin Brindley, Artturi Lehkonen and captain Gabriel Landeskog also had goals. The Avalanche saw 13 different players record at least a point.

Sabres 3, Canucks 2: Rasmus Dahlin and Tage Thompson each had a goal and an assist, and visiting Buffalo beat struggling Vancouver.

Zach Benson also scored for the Sabres and Alex Lyon stopped 29 shots as Buffalo won its second straight following a three-game skid.

Kiefer Sherwood and Max Sasson scored for the Canucks, and Thatcher Demko made 12 saves in his return from a lower-body injury he suffered on Nov. 11. Vancouver has lost six of its last seven (1-5-1).