Bullrush and Variants

The material in this document derives from two sources. Some of it is cited directly from the material supplied by school students in response to Section 7 of the original questionnaire. Some of it is a summary of material provided by students during school visits. This material varies considerably in the degree to which it is a direct citation of what was said, or a digest of the information provided.

Note that there are sometimes similarities between the games here and those in the Tag Variants and Creeping Up Variants sections.

Touch Bullrush

W12

Specified features: touch **Tiggy rush**: runners are not tackled, but tagged.

W17 - WA1

Specified features: touch; call names; touched in middle; successful runner calls bullrush One person is in the middle of the field. Heaps of kids line up. They choose a person to run to the other side. If you catch the person, they're in too. If they get to the other side, they yell "Bullrush" – everyone else runs, and the middle people have to try and catch them.

V21 – WN22

Specified features: touch

Bullrush: everybody is running and the rest is trying to catch them.

V21 – WN22

Specified features: touch; call names, numbers

Ballrush: No one's allowed to run unless that person says a number or your name. If it's a little field you play on you better watch out cause there might be some out of bounds.

V21 - WN23

Specified features: touch

Bullrush:

Everyone runs, try not to get tagged.

V21 - WN23

Specified features: touch; call names; runner calls ballrush OR tagger calls ballrush **Ballrush**:

You stand in a line and there is a person that's in. That person chases someone and calls out their name and the person that's been called runs forward and says Ballrush and then they all start to run and the tagger tags as many people as they can. And they have to try and run to the other side."

"Ballrush – you stand in a line and one person is in, and when the person who's in yells Ballrush you run to the other side without being tagged."

"You stand in a line, one person is in. When they yell Ballrush you run to the other side without being tagged."

H35

Specified features: touch; call names; runner calls bullrush AND/OR successful runner calls bullrush; tagged in middle, stand still ?OR move round

"**Bullrush**: Get a group of people (4 or more). One person goes in the middle and calls someone else who calls bullrush. They if they call a person the person tries to run to the other side without getting tagged. If he said bullrush they all run. If a person gets called they can call bullrush and make everyone else run with you."

"**Bullrush**: One person stands in the middle and they can move around. There is lots of people at one end and the person in the middle calls a name of one of the people at the end and he or she runs and if the person at the end gets to the other end and he calls out bullrush and they all try to get to the [end] without getting tag and that keeps on happening until no one is left."

"Bullrush: Bullrush can have 3 or more players in it. One person stands about 6 metres away and that person is in. The rest of the people stand at one end of the field. The person who is in is to call a name of one of the people at the side and they step out and try to get to the other side of the field without being tugged. They can call out ballrush while running and dodging so that all the others come out and try to get to the other side without being tugged. If the person picked make it to the other side it is ballrush and the others come. If the person picked gets tugged they stand on the spot and try to reach out to get the others. It's the same if the others get tugged. When they are all tugged the last one to get tugged is in for the next game. Name [sic] of the game is to be the last one tugged." "Bullrush: Get a group of about 10 people. One person goes out and faces the people who are lined up. You can call a name, colour, number the people and call it out. Once you have called the name, colour or whatever, you try and tag them between the boundary lines. Then you can call bullrush. Then everybody runs and if you get tagged you stay still but you can have a go at getting them." "Bullrush (but uncertainty over bull vs ball): One person is in, he or she stands in the middle of the field or court. There are a line of people at one end. The person who is in calls someone out. If he gets to the other end without being tug the person calls bullrush then everyone runs. If he doesn't make it the person calls another person. The aim of the game is not to let the people get to the other line."

"**Bullrush**: 1. There is a small square field and a group of 5+ line up on one side and one person in the middle. 2. The person in the middle will call out a person's name. That person will try to run to the other end without being tug by the person in the middle. [Diagram]. 3. The person in the middle can also call bullrush. That means everyone runs. If you are tug you must help the person in the middle. 4 The game ends when everyone is tug and the winner is the last one to be tug. The winner is in for the next game in the middle."

"Ballrush: Rules: The person who's in stays in the middle and calls out a name. The person with that name has to run. If he gets tagged he goes in. But if he gets to the other side, it's ballrush, the person who's also in can say ballrush and everyone has to run."

Tackle Bullrush

Q2

Specified features: tackle; last person tackled is next in

Bullrush: "When we play bullrush we don't play touch, we play tackle and the person who is in the middle tackles the person that they choose."

"We play it differently: you have to tackle them" (x2)

"We call it bullrush but you tackle the person"

"Bullrush is different: we play tackle not tag"

"We play Ballrush differently. We tackle the person instead of tagging." "We play bullrush differently because when there's the last person that hasn't been chosen, they get chosen and if they make it to the other end they are in the middle."

R4

Specified features: tag or tackle; tagged calls next runner or bullrush; caught stay in middle **Bullrush rules**: "The person that gets touched or tackled has to call out the next person, or call out bullrush. If they call out bullrush, then everybody gets to go. The person who is touched or tackled has the choice to call out bullrush." "A whole group of people go on one side of a field and one or maybe a little more are in the middle. When someone gets called they run and try not to get tackled. If tackled completely to the ground you also in the middle."

T5

Specified features: tackle

Players are tackled.

U8- AK21

Specified features: tackle; call by name; tagger calls bullrush; tagged calls next runner; tackle involves holding on ground for at least 3 secs

Tackle Bullrush: Step 1: One person stands in the middle with several people on a line facing him/her.

Step 2: The person in the middle calls either one of the players' names or Bullrush.

Step 3:The player who has been called has to get to the other parallel line without getting tackled

Step 4: If so (the person who got tackled) joins the person in the middle and calls another person's name, etc

Step 5: If Bullrush is called all the remaining players (not the people in the middle) run to the other line without getting tackled.

Step 6: The people/person in the middle can tackle as many people as they like but only if they call their name or Bullrush.

Step 7: The person who has been tackled must be on the ground for a minimum of 3 seconds for the tackle to be counted.

V8 - AK15

Specified features: tackle

As in description, except the person in the middle tries to tackle, not touch the other players.

V8 – AK30

Specified features: tackle or touch; call by name, clothing; runner calls bullrush OR successful runner calls bullrush; out if touched

Tackle Bullrush: "The same as bullrush but in old clothes, and instead of touching them you tackle them."

"You are all lined up and you call someone up and you have to tackle them down. They are in. If they say bullrush everyone runs and tries to make it to the other end."

"We tackle instead of touch. It's still called bullrush."

"You need to call out clothing like black shoes, jumpers on, etc. Then they need to run to the other side."

When someone is in the middle and then they're standing on one side to run to the other side, the person in the middle calls out the person's name, then that person runs to the other side. If that person gets touched then he's out, but if he/she runs past and gets away, he/she calls bullrush.

V8 - AK40

Specified features: tackle; keep shoulders on ground for 3 secs **Bullrush:** a difference: We get to tackle them and keep their shoulders on the ground for 3 seconds.

W11 - HM1

Specified features: tackle or tag

Tackle: in a box if you go out, you're it, run from one end to the other in a box. Can't get tug if at the end of the other box.

W12

Specified features: tackle; say 1-2-3 etc; call by names, colours, birthdates; successful runner calls bullrush; caught stay in middle

Bullrush: Runners can be called according to colours they are wearing, birthdates as well as names. "Bullrush" is called only if a runner makes it to the other side. Runners are tackled to the ground, and the catchers say "1-2-3 you're in the middle with me".

W14

Specified features: tackle Rules are the same except you tackle them instead of touching them.

T15 – NP1

Specified features: tackle

Tackle instead of touch.

e15

Specified features: tackle; successful runner calls bullrush **Bullrush:** One person runs to the other side while the one in the middle tries to tackle that person. If he gets to the other side they call out "bullrush". Banned." Banned: too rough. But we would play it that way.

"It's banned because it's too dangerous but I like playing it."

"Bullrush, Octopus: they are played the same (it's banned)

S16

Specified features: tackle; hold on ground at least 3 secs; call by name; tagger calls scrag if unsuccessful

Scrag: Someone stands in the middle and they call someone. They come up and the person in the middle has to catch them and have them on the ground for at least 3 seconds. Then if they don't get them the person in the middle calls Scrag!

b16 – HS4

Specified features: tackle

Tackle bullrush: Where you tackle instead of tagging people.

V21 - WN4

Specified features: tackle; call by name; runner calls bullrush; caught stay in middle **Bullrush**: There is one person in the middle of a field and he calls out someone's name. That person then says "Bullrush". All of the people have to try and run past the person but if the person in the middle tackles one guy down they are in. This process carries on till one person is left.

P23

Specified features: tackle; tap on back 3 times; first caught is next tagger; caught stay in middle **Tackle Bullrush**: it is the same as Tag Bullrush. Instead of tagging we tackle. When you get the down you have to tap them on the back 3 times. Then they help you tag or tackle. The first person caught is the tagger for the next game.

P27

Specified features: tackle or tag; caught are out;

"It is called Ballrush"

"Ballrush or Octopus: The outs. No pushing."

"Bullrush, Octopus: you can tackle the people"

"We play tackle Bullrush"

"Bullrush, you don't tag, you tackle."

"Bullrush: tackle instead of touch"

"Bullrush: You tackle people that are running to the other end"

"Bullrush: If get tagged go out and don't do anything"

Tackle bullrush: You still have the same rules but you are allowed to tackle them."

"Bullrush: we do the same but we tackle"

"Bullrush: we tackle them instead of tag"

"Bullrush: not touching, it's tackling"

"Ballrush: same"

O28 - CH5

Specified features: tackle

"Octopus is very similar to Bullrush but you don't tackle the people that are running to the other side."

E31

Specified features: tackle; hold down on back for 5 secs OR torture till "Mercy"; last caught is next tagger; caught stay in middle; 'in' if you say mercy

Bullrush: "Instead of tagging, you tackle them and hold them on the ground."

"We usually play it how you tackle them and hold them for 5 seconds. Or we tackle them and then torture them until they say mercy."

"They tackle instead of touching"

"You tackle instead of touch"

"When we play Bullrush it's the same rules as it is in the questionnaire, but we tackle than touch."

"We play it but we call it Ballrush and sometimes Mercy Ballrush and we have to tackle."

"We play the game pretty much the same except instead of tagging we tackle each other."

"The game described have the same rules except the person/people in must tackle somebody trying to reach the other side (not just touch)"

"We play basically the same but to get the person down they have to be on their back"

"The game described here is basically the same but when you run instead of getting tagged you get tackled, the rest is the same"

"The person who is in has to tackle someone and hold them and beat them till they say mercy"

"The person in tackles a person and hits him or her until they say mercy. The last person to go in is the person to get all the other people in the next game."

"Ballrush: One person is in the middle and you can call out a person's name or call "Ballrush" and they all run. The person in the middle tackles as many people as he can and if you get tackled you help the middle person."

"The person in the middle has to touch or tackle the person that they call out before they get to the other side"

"The person in the middle, he has to tackle everyone else"

"We tackle them and torture them if they get caught – until they say mercy. If they say mercy they are in . If they don't and they get away, then they can run again but[?] one there is the winner."

H35

Specified features: tackle; call by name; runner calls bullrush **Bullrush**: One person is in the middle of the field and he or she calls out a person's name. That person called has to run out and call "bullrush" and all of them have to get past without being tackled to the other side. Then you start again from the other side."

C36

Specified features: tackle; hit on back 3 times and once on head; call by name; caught stay in middle

Bullrush: Call out a name. They try to get to the other end. The person in the middle tries to tackle them. Then they hit them on the back 3 times and once on the head. Now they're in the middle as well.

G36

Specified features: tackle; caught stay in middle; caught can move; successful runner calls bullrush; last caught in next in

Bullrush is a game for 5 or more people. It involves one person in the middle of a 20 metre by 30 metre area (areas can be altered depending on number of people). The idea of the game is to get past the person who runs around in the middle

trying to tackle them or scrag them to the ground. The line you start on is one of the 20 metre lines. The main task is to get to the opposite line on the field. If tackled to the ground before making it to the other side the person just tackled must stay in the middle until the end of the game. That person may also run around and try to tackle the person. If the runner trying to get to the opposite line gets there then everyone on the start/finish line runs and tries to get through the tacklers. The winner is the last person not tackled. He starts off the next game in the middle.

Octopus

T5

Octopus

T5-WR2 - visit material

Octopus: the octopuses run around, the seaweed stays still

U8- AK21

Octopus

V8-AK27 – visit material

Octopus

W11 - HM1

Specified features: touch; caught stand still **Octopus**: players tug stand still and only original player may run.

W12

Specified features: touch; caught form chain **Octopus**: where catchers join hands to form a chain. No moving.

T15-NP1 – visit material

Seaweed = **octopus**.

S16

Specified features: touch; caught stand still; tagger calls Octopus Octopus: Rules: If you get tagged you have to stay in one place and only able to move one foot and your arms. Octopuses must stay in the boundaries. There are 2 people as octopuses, 1 caller and the runners. The caller calls "Octopus" and all the runners must run to the other side of the boundaries without being tagged. If they get tagged, they become a tentacle.

b16 – HS1

Specified features: touch; caught stand still; taggers call go/teachers call swim Octopus: "You need 5 taggers. They go in the middle of field. The rest are runners. When you get tag you have to stay where the taggers tag you, and they also get to tag. They get to step to the side. Play until you have five people left who haven't been tag."

"The class run when the 5 people are trying to get them"

"You need 5 runs. And the rest run across."

"2 or 4 players could be in. The other players run away from the people who are in. If you get tagged you stand on the spot and tag the people that are running." "2 people have to be in. The rest on the side. Then the people who are in say "Go". Then you run across to the other side before they tag you."

"5 people are in and the teachers says swim and we run to the end without getting tagged." [Diagram]

"2 people or more have to tag the other people. The other people have to run to the other side."

"Where one player has to run and tag the other players as they run backward and forwards."

W18 - visit material

Specified features: caught stand still

Octopus = seaweed, can't move your feet.

V21 - WN22

Octopus

V21 - WN23

Specified features: touch; caught stand still

Octopus: You run around. 2 people tag others. When you are tagged you have to stand still and tag others as they run past.

Q21-NL2 – visit material

Specified features: touch; caught stand still

Octopus: when tagged, have to try to tag passers by waving arms without moving feet.

P22

Specified features: touch; caught stand still; taggers call Octopus **Octopus:** The taggers call out 'Octopus' and all the players run to the other side of the field. If they are tagged they must stay still and try to tag other players.

P27

Specified features: touch; caught stand still

Octopus: "Everyone runs and if the person in the middle tags them they have to stand in that spot and use their arms to tag other people."

O28 – CH5

Specified features: touch; caught stand still; call Octopus;

Octopus: "This is much the same except the people who have been tagged must stay still instead of trying others"

"It's like Bullrush except you call "Octopus" for everyone to run. If you are tagged you become an octopus and stay still. When everyone runs, all the octopuses tag people passing by. The last one tagged is the winner."

"Everyone stands at one side of the court and 1 or 2 people are the taggers. You try to run across without being tagged and if you get tagged you stand in a stiff

candle form and try to tag as many people as possible without moving from your original tagging spot."

O28-CH6 – visit material

Specified features: touch; touched stay still in middle In Octopus, you can't move once you're caught.

H35

Specified features: touch; caught stand still; call by name; runner calls ballrush OR successful runner calls ballrush; caught stay in middle, stand still; last caught is next in

"**Bullrush**: Bullrush can have 3 or more players in it. One person stands about 6 metres away and that person is in. The rest of the people stand at one end of the field. The person who is in is to call a name of one of the people at the side and they step out and try to get to the other side of the field without being tugged. They can call out ballrush while running and dodging so that all the others come out and try to get to the other side without being tugged. If the person picked make it to the other side it is ballrush and the others come. If the person picked gets tugged they stand on the spot and try to reach out to get the others. It's the same if the others get tugged. When they are all tugged the last one to get tugged."

I35-DN3 - visit material

Specified features: touch; caught stand still; call by name; runner calls 'octopus' In **Octopus**, you can call a name for one person to run, or 'octopus' for everyone to run, and if you're tagged you stay with one foot fixed to try to catch the others. Not like Bullrush because there you tackle people.

C37 – IV1

Specified features: touch; taggers call "meal time"; caught are called sharks **Octopus:** Three people are 'in'. The rest of the people stay behind a crack or a line on the tennis court. The 'in' people call out 'meal time' and everyone has to get down to the other end of the court. The 'in' people are called 'sharks' and when they 'tug' the other people they have to stop immediately and help the sharks.

Seaweed

Z12-RT3 – visit material

Seaweed

d13 – visit material

Seaweed

T15-NP1 – visit material

Seaweed = octopus.

b16 – HS4

Specified features: touch; caught stand still; call by name, colour or everyone; last caught is unlucky

Seaweed: We play seaweed with one person in and the rest have to get from one side of the gym to the other, and if someone gets touched they have to stand still and try and touch anybody else. If they go outside the boundary, the person that is in gets to choose where whoever went out should stand.

Seaweed Tag: everyone stands at one end except for the chosen one. He or she calls a name or colour or calls for everyone. Whoever gets caught has to stay where they are and tag whoever comes along without moving their legs. This proceeds until everyone is caught. The last person caught is the unlucky seaweed blob.

In **seaweed** you sit down when tagged to be a rock OR you stand to catch others without moving feet.

Z18 – visit material

seaweed

W18 – visit material

Specified features: caught stand still

Octopus = **seaweed**, can't move your feet.

P23

Specified features: touch; caught stand still, known as seaweed; call colour; Seaweed: Is a bit like bullrush but instead the tagger calls out a colour and people wearing that colour have to run to the other side. People who are caught have to stand still and wave their arms and try and get other people running through them who if caught are seaweed as well.

Colour Bullrush

$\mathbf{Q2}$

Specified features: call by colour

Colour War: "We play bullrush differently and we call it colour war. First you pick a person to be in the middle and that person picks a colour. The people with the colour he picks runs [sic]"

W12

Specified features: tackle; caught stay in middle; 1-2-3 etc; call by colour, name, birthdate **Bullrush**: Runners can be called according to colours they are wearing, birthdates as well as names. "Bullrush" is called only if a runner makes it to the other side. Runners are tackled to the ground, and the catchers say "1-2-3 you're in the middle with me".

b16 – HS1

Specified features: call by colour, clothing, etc

Colour Bullrush: "It is exactly the same as bullrush but for colour bullrush you call out a colour and people run and try to get to the other side only if they have the colour that the person in the middle has called out."

Bullrush: we don't only call out names, we call out names, colours, shoes, no shoes, hair colour, anything"

V21 - WN23

Specified features: touch; chant; call by colour; caught becomes tagger **Froggy froggy:** "You chant "Froggy, froggy, may we cross your golden river?" then you cross."

"People said "Froggy, froggy, may we cross your golden river?" and the frog said "Only if you've got blue", etc. Then the frog chases them and who gets caught becomes the frog".

"Sing chant, one person gets picked, get tagged."

H35

Specified features: touch; caught stand still; call by colour, number, etc; successful tagger calls bullrush

"**Bullrush**: Get a group of about 10 people. One person goes out and faces the people who are lined up. You can call a name, colour, number the people and call it out. Once you have called the name, colour or whatever, you try and tag them between the boundary lines. Then you can call bullrush. Then everybody runs and if you get tagged you stay still but you can have a go at getting them."

C37 – IV1

Specified features: touch; call by name, colour, clothing

Rush 'n' tag: [?Russian Tag]

The 'in' person calls out a colour or piece of clothing or name. Runners wearing what is called must cross without being 'tagged'.

Ball Bullrush = Ballrush

W12

Specified features: hit with ball

Ballrush: where a ball is used.

H35

Specified features: hit with ball; call by name; runner calls ballrush; hit stand still "**Ballrush**: There is a person in the middle of the field with a ball and there is a line of people behind a line. The person in the middle calls a person's name and they come out. If the person calls out "Ballrush" all the people have to run while the person with the ball has to hit someone. If they get hit you have to stay where you get hit. If you have to stay where you get hit, when the person with the ball calls for another person you have to try and touch them."

Farmer Farmer

e15

Farmers Field

W18

Specified features: touch; chant; call by colour, clothing; free pass for those called; others are targets for tagger; touched stay in middle

Farmer, Farmer:

One person starts as 'it' in the middle. The other players behind a line call out "Farmer, farmer, may we cross your river". The farmer then replies "Only if you're wearing X (a certain colour, or piece of clothing). If you are wearing that particular colour etc. you are free to walk to the other side without being 'tagged'. If you haven't got that colour etc. on you have to try to get to the other side without being 'tagged'. If you are tagged you stay in the middle and help the farmer catch other people. The process is repeated until everyone is 'in'. {A diagram was included, but the account is so clear that it is superfluous.}

O28-CH6 – visit material

Specified features: touch; chant; call by colour; free pass for those called; others are targets for tagger; touched stay in middle; touched can move

Farmer, Farmer:

Farmer, farmer, may I cross over your river? is played here as in H33 except that those tagged are free to move round to capture later crossers. In Octopus, you can't move.

H33 – visit material

Specified features: touch; chant; call by colour; free pass for those called; others are targets for tagger; touched stay in middle

Farmer, Farmer:

Farmer, farmer can we [var: may I] cross your golden river?: 2 in the middle, say 'you may cross the golden river if you are [e.g. wearing blue]'. Those wearing blue get across unmolested; others are tagged. If tagged, must stand in the middle as in Octopus elsewhere (not mentioned at this school).

Other names

e15

Kimberley Mayhead:

Call out red (for stop) green (for go). It was banned because it was too rough.

Q26 – visit material

Barge also used for Bullrush.

Summary of findings

There are many different features in these games, and while some of these features are mutually exclusive, many of the feature sets can be combined to create games which are essentially very similar, but vary in detail. The basic features:

The game begins with most people as potential runners and few in the middle. Numbers in the middle at the outset vary from 1-5.

Those who are in the middle call for someone to run. This may be done by name, a colour they are wearing, a piece of clothing they are wearing, a month of birth, "or anything" as one child put it.

This results in two situations: if a name is called, there is a single initial runner; if something else is called, there will be a variably-sized group of initial runners. Sometimes the catcher(s) have to try to touch the runners, sometimes they have to tackle them, and sometimes they have to hit them with a ball.

What counts as a successful tackle usually involves holding the runner on the ground for a specified time: 3-5 seconds. Sometimes the body position is specified: on the back; with shoulders on the ground. The successful tackle may also have hitting associated: hit three times on the back, sometimes with an additional hit on the head. In "Mercy" bullrush, the one on the ground is hit/beaten until they either escape or call for mercy. The hitting may be associated with the chant "1-2-3, you're in the middle with me".

The instigation of the "bullrush", when everyone runs, is a matter where there is considerable variation. The following possibilities were described: the person in the middle can choose to call bullrush, rather than calling an individual; the runner can call bullrush at any time during their solo run; a runner who successfully reaches the other side without being touched/tackled calls bullrush when they reach their goal, or there is an automatic bullrush under these circumstances; the catcher calls bullrush if they succeed in catching their victim. There are several variants for what is called: the traditional "bullrush", "ballrush", "octopus"; "go"; "swim".

The behaviour required of those caught is also variable. In most instances they stay in the middle and assist the original catcher(s), but they may simply be out. Sometimes they are free to run around, like the original catcher, but sometimes they are required to stand on the spot where they were caught, and reach out with their arms and attempt to catch other runners. Sometimes they have to link arms/hold hands and form a chain (which then effectively has just two catching arms), and endeavour to trap runners.

In some versions, there is a chant at the outset, asking for permission to cross. In one version, when the person in the middle specifies the parameter of those who can cross (e.g. wearing a particular colour), those who meet the condition have a "free pass" to the other side, while everyone who does not meet the condition has to try to run, and is then a potential target for the catcher. Sometimes the chant is merely used to specify the parameters for those who have to run. Sometimes the first person caught is the next in, sometimes the last caught is next in.

The associated name does not necessarily reflect particularly well the characteristics of the game. Tackle bullrush may be so called to distinguish it from Tiggy or Tag (Bull)rush, but not necessarily. Bullrush where colours are

called may be called Colour Bullrush, but not necessarily. Octopus may be used when those caught form chains or when they stand still, or simply as a name for Tag (as opposed to Tackle) Bullrush. Seaweed was only reported when those caught had to stand still.

Bullrush involving a ball may be called Ballrush, but not necessarily. Conversely, Ballrush is in some cases the name used for traditional tackling Bullrush. Some of this variation no doubt arises as teachers/schools/children endeavour to remove some of the roughest elements from this originally extremely violent game, but not all of it seems likely to arise from these endeavours. Because playground games do not have written codes and referees, the rules are always subject to negotiation and modification. New names may arise to distinguish variants from their source games, and may continue to coexist, or may replace the older name, or be replaced by the older name as this distinguishing function becomes less important. It is clear that in many schools, the game is played with a range of variable rules.